

EVANDER

by EDEN PHILLPOTTS



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EVANDER

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BY

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“THE GIRL AND THE FAUN,” “A SHADOW PASSES”
“DELIGHT,” ETC.



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I

HOW FESTUS WEDDED LIVIA

IN time past lawful marriage might only be contracted among the nobler folk. Patricians alone enjoyed the privilege, so that many admirable wives were lost to the community and many good men denied the pleasure of exhibiting a husband's virtues. It is not easy for us to imagine a high civilisation, wherein the upper ten alone were permitted this domestic delight ; but thus it happened, until came the tribune, Canuleius, who—advanced spirit that he was—perceived and declared no reason in the nature of things to prevent the marriage of the middle classes. Nay, this innovator went farther, and, greatly daring, claimed that every Roman citizen might become a husband, if it so pleased him.

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Heaven was sustained, though we may suppose the forum thundered with fierce and bitter opposition, for doubtless your patricians resented with all their might so grave an instalment of progressive legislation. The populace began to wed—charily at first, then with greater trust; and since the gods smiled upon their nuptials, even the rag-picker, or dustman felt he might take a wife without affront to Olympus.

From the Latins to all the Italians this prodigious boon presently extended, and when Caracalla donned the purple, he conferred marriage as a royal gift on every inhabitant of the Roman Empire.

Thus we find that even Caracalla, an emperor for whom few just persons spare a smile, can claim one item on the credit side of his sanguinary account.

But, by Apollo and Bacchus, who shall dogmatise on this great subject? Has not marriage itself been weighed in the balance of public opinion and found wanting? The invention loses its old, four-square majesty.

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Indeed, what institution but grows ruinous and moss-covered in these our days?

Moreover, while the gods were held to commend all lawful unions, they themselves could not deny that even in celestial circles the marital state worked not to much edification.

No shadow, however, had crept over marriage when the woodman, Festus, desired to wed Livia, the daughter of Carmenta, the washerwoman. For their humble class, a vernal bloom of youth still graced the rite. They were themselves pioneers—the very first in that hamlet to venture upon the doubtful privileges and certain obligations of wedlock. It was, indeed, counted something of an eccentricity when the young man's intentions proved strictly honourable, and the pagan folk doubted whether Festus were not taking himself and Livia almost too seriously.

There needed a pinch of the heroine in your soul, also, to wed if you happened to be a washerwoman's daughter in those days, and Livia, when she accepted the woodman, while earning uneasy admiration from certain of her

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friends, won some sneers among her more conservative sisters, who professed to prefer freedom and evaded the rite from choice, or missed it from necessity.

Indeed, the Mrs. Grundy of that village looked with doubting eye on marriage and feared that it might open a door to many things not convenient.

But as soon as Festus won Livia's love, they agreed to snap their fingers at convention, pretend to be patricians and enter into the great mystery of united life. After she accepted him, he begged her to fix the day and let it be soon ; but the careless wight was not aware that May must be avoided and that the first half of June would fail their purpose. Indeed all the *dies religiosi* and the calends, nones and ides were equally out of the question, if he desired Fortuna to smile upon their experiment.

“ The better the day, the better the deed,” said Festus, a free and easy spirit who took no thought for the morrow.

“ Not at all,” answered more cautious Livia.

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“ We must court no needless risks, sweetheart. It is well known that a great many months are unpropitious to the marriage of men ; and did we take our vows on some day sacred to a god, or goddess, we should make a powerful enemy from the first. But all are agreed that marriage must be entered into with as few handicaps as possible, and we will not go out of our way to complicate what may prove difficult enough in any case.”

“ Be hopeful,” said Festus. “ I am no authority on the sacred days, Jupiter forgive me, but so that Bacchus smiles, all will be well. Find an occasion that promises to give us a run for our money, my sweet treasure, and the quicker, the better.”

She obeyed him and at a time when religion was powerless to frown, they wedded.

The pair dwelt in a rude village beside Lake Larius, and since this was the first enterprise of the kind celebrated among those purple hills, they sent for a flamen skilled in the rite, who directed them how to proceed.

Livia’s hair was arranged in six dark locks,

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and she had more than enough. Upon her head she wore a wreath of valley lilies and alpen-roses of her own gathering, and she shrouded her brow in a scarlet veil. Her tunica was of spotless white, woven without seam and fastened by a girdle of wool. A victim being slain—a little lamb—the auspices were taken and the contract completed. Then her mother having led Livia to Festus, they joined hands and lifted their prayers to the watching gods. There followed the sacrifice of a bull calf on the public altar, and the smoke of it ascending, drifted far over the lake.

A feast came next, and Carmenta, the washerwoman, did the best in this matter that her means allowed. There was a mess of flesh and fowl with onions and olives; white bread, lettuces and curded cheese; chestnut cakes with herbs; dried figs and apricots and withered fruit of the wild pear. Much red wine went to the banqueting and sweet liqueurs made of heart's-ease and cypress. Not till the shadows fell huge from the hills to the waters spread beneath them, did they stop

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eating ; not before the first firefly twinkled a little lamp along the ilex groves, had the wedding guests drunk all there was to drink.

Then night fell and Festus, taking Livia in his arms, bore her from her mother with show of violence, to the shrill cackling of women and laughter of the men.

Torch-bearers led the way, their pitch-pines blazing and making the blue dusk red ; flute-players pierced the Italian peace and gaily squeaked ; while the folk sang the Fescennini in rough Saturnian verse. They belonged to Silvanus—his festival, but chimed with the business of the time, and the jesters with raddled faces, who rollicked to right and left of the bridal pair, spared no wit to give point to the pagan humour and ribald merriment of their ancient song.

Through the trees, or at the edge of the waters, there peeped nymphs, goat-foot fauns and other immortal creatures of lake and mountain, vale and forest, who spied upon humanity with wonder when the world was young. They perceived that an event out of

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the common was being celebrated and, of their friendship, joined the laughter, though the jokes were beyond their comprehension.

Two boys, whose fathers and mothers still lived, walked beside Livia, and a third lighted her feet with a white-thorn torch to guard against magic, or any evil fairy ; while behind her were borne the spindle and thread, symbol of wifely duty. Festus threw walnuts to the boys and signified thereby that, as a husband, he put away childish things for ever.

Then came they to the exceeding modest home the bridegroom had provided for his wife, and Livia anointed the door-posts with oil and fat and decked them with woollen fillets. Over the atrium she was lifted and welcomed by her husband in the partnership of fire and water, which is to say domestic life and worship. For the gods from the first made, or meddled, with marriage, and some are even recognised as the august patrons and supporters of the state. Marriages, indeed, were always made in heaven, but such was the strain, when the demand became so vast, that

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they had to be turned out wholesale and Olympus henceforth declined to guarantee the quality.

Now Festus and Livia prayed to Talassio—the unknown god of marriage—that they might be happy ; the epithalamy was chanted and the young pair left in peace.

A full moon sailed above the clearing where they were to dwell ; the revellers departed to their homes ; a kind old woman wiped away the mother's natural tears.

“ Fear nothing, Carmenta,” said she. “ Festus is a good man and will use her well if she obey him in all things and minister to his comfort. Moreover, when he is weary of her, he cannot cast her off. Even though he hate her, yet must they now live together until death separates them.”

“ That is why I weep,” answered Carmenta, “ for love hath wings and flies. Marriage, so far as I have grasped it, is love on a chain, and one may not keep a wild thing on a chain, for it will the sooner perish.”

“ True,” answered the other ; “ but it is a

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quality of this thing called marriage that it begetteth a new sense between the male and female. It is designed for the dignity and security of women, so that when love is out-worn, they may still reap the reward of their sacrifice and the respect and position proper to the mothers of those to come."

"If marriage begetteth a new sense in man, it is well," answered Carmenta; "he needs many new senses; but men are men and women are women, and freedom is the only road to peace."

II

THE DISCIPLE OF APOLLO

HE was called Evander after that son of Hermes and an Arcadian nymph, who shone in goodness, founded the city of Pallenteum on the hill afterwards called Palatine, and introduced the arts of music and writing and the worship of Pan, whom the Latins named Faunus. That Evander was indeed worshipped at Rome as a god, having his altar set on the Aventine ; and our Evander, son of Cornelius, the fisherman, alive to the distinction of his name, lived worthy of it from his youth up. He caught fish to help his father, but, at twenty years of age, he better loved to exhort the people and improve their minds. To Apollo he dedicated his days and practised the self-denial and austerity beloved of Phœbus. Concerning sin, indeed, he knew nothing, since

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that fantastic concept had not yet come into the world ; but with crime, its sleepless issues and undying consequence, he was familiar. Therefore he strove to turn the Larian folk from evil, edifying all men by the dignity of his discourse and the purity of his days.

To him goodness belonged as a second nature, and if he ever wondered in the phantasm of human existence, unrolled around him, it was why goodness appeared beset with such difficulty for his fellow-creatures, while wrong-doing, despite its notorious sequel, yet attracted the majority of them.

He was of a placid countenance, large-featured and lofty-browed. The spiders of thought had already woven their first webs upon his forehead ; but his eyes were bright, his mouth was firm, his voice as clear and cold as a mountain brook at dawn. He never hastened about anything. The steadfast quality of his intellect was reflected in the distinction of his actions, his reserved gestures and judicial and balanced utterances.

He ate no meat and partook only of inani-

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mate life. Pot-herbs and roots, corn and the harvest of fruit-bearing and nut-bearing trees sustained him and clarified his thought. He drank water and frowned upon wine, though he had doubtless permitted himself the poisons of tea and coffee, after the manner of our own intellectual vegetarians, had those beverages been then within the reach of ancient Italy.

Once he had lived on the eastern borders of Larius, but the hamlet where his mother died in giving him life, proved not large enough for his missionary instincts and the rude people who dwelt therein, feeling uneasy at the near presence of such waxing virtue, had urged him to seek other fields. When he hesitated to oblige them, these pagans so far neglected the light as to insist upon their native son's departure.

Therefore Cornelius, the fisherman, and Evander departed in their little boat; and the father, with paternal pride, cursed his neighbours for their folly.

“ You will be proud in time to come and

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lift a statue to my boy," said he ; while they, after the manner of barbarians, declared that they would prefer his statue to himself. " His pillar," said these benighted folk, " shall surely adorn our shores, if his fame ever resound from the other bank ; and for our part, being homely men with much upon our hands, we would rather enjoy the after-clap of his glory, than endure those activities upon which it may be built."

They believed it uncomfortable to live with heroes, holding that, such is the weakness of our nature, we can best look upon their statues and rejoice in their fruits, when time has removed the fierce life force, mellowed its processes, obscured its asperities, and kneaded its accomplishment into the common wealth of human progress.

On the western border of the lake, Evander presently became an institution, and all men admitted his remarkable attainments. He dwelt in a hut near his father and did not fish very often, but preferred to advance morals and attack error. It was his earnest purpose

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to improve everything, uplift everybody, and lead the least and greatest to Apollo.

An example of this indiscriminate enthusiasm awaits us upon the occasion of first meeting Evander.

Sitting before his door, speculating on ethical subjects, there came before him a smoke-grey kitten with amber eyes. She carried her tail erect, as a cat will who in her own opinion has done a good deed, and in her mouth appeared a glittering dragon-fly, which the little creature had captured from a bed of rushes beside the lake.

Now the kitten had not escaped Evander's care for the improvement of all life, and he was still seeking to wean her from flesh or fish, since it seemed to him that, given a vegetable diet, she would cast off those ferine, feline qualities which make against society. He even hoped that she might develop a measure of altruism and the power to see other points of view than her own. For he had not failed to mark that both the greater and lesser cats are self-centred and inclined to put their

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personal welfare before the good of the community. The kitten, therefore, failed of that applause she expected, and the fact that she had done a clever and original thing was not taken into account by Evander. It was the young man's golden rule to regard every enterprise from the standpoint of morals and justice ; and, viewed in this white light, much that happens will not, of course, bear inspection. He took the dragon-fly from the kitten and shook his head to find the insect was no more.

“Live and let live, little beast,” he said. “Respect your neighbour and recollect that his place in the cosmos is empty if not filled by him. Remove him therefrom and you create a vacuum and wound nature. Enlarge your sympathies until they extend to cover all things ; then only will you attain a synthetic understanding and perceive that to destroy the life of a fellow-creature is to endanger the universal scheme. This dragon-fly had his claim upon society. He was a person of repute with a natural history of the greatest

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interest. For years he dwelt beneath the water ; then his apotheosis brought him into the air and he hoped to rejoice in the beams of Apollo while the summer lasted. But your ruthless paw has deprived him of his short-lived joy and struck him into an early grave. His link with the infinite is broken before its time ; a dissonance is created ; the world is so much the worse for the thing you have done.”

Thus he spoke from force of habit, for he had to be talking. Then Evander went farther and looked among his papers, because he was a poet also and had learned to write and read and set down his thoughts in good Latin.

“ I have here some observations on the dragon-fly, and a valuable moral induced by study of the insect,” he said, and he read these verses to the kitten.

A dragon-fly, when from the water’s edge
He cometh, though perhaps the vulgar doubt it,
Will leave his waterproof upon a sedge,
Then spread his wings and fly away without it.

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But presently, at sign of coming rain,
Feeling a little nervous of the weather,
He seeks to don his waterproof again,
And finds that he's outgrown it altogether.

Now, though a dragon-fly won't see the force
And hidden lesson of this observation,
You, with your quicker senses, may, of course,
Should morals have for you some fascination.

Cast down but not convinced, the smoke-grey kitten stole away—to catch another dragon-fly if it might be possible; and Evander, cheered by the sound of his own voice, set forth upon a mission he had already contemplated.

The marriage of Festus and Livia interested him exceedingly. He held marriage a hopeful and helpful contrivance, and trusted that it would become more common. Indeed, inspired by Apollo, he had long proclaimed the need for this contract; he gave great praise to Festus and Livia and promised them, with confidence, the blessing of the more important gods upon their union.

Now he walked to visit the youthful pair

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and found them, after a fortnight of wedded life, still happy and well content. As he entered their rough dwelling, they were sitting down to a little meal, and Evander, unknowing that Festus had procured them at some trouble for Livia, ate up a whole platter of red radishes while he talked. He believed that he was taking the food that mattered least, while, in reality, he devoured the master dish of the banquet. But nothing is so easily misunderstood as humility.

“A vegetarian can be as greedy as anybody,” said Festus, after Evander was gone. His wife, however, reproved him; she entertained the highest respect and admiration for their guest, and knew that he walked with Apollo and could say something worth hearing in any ear.

Having eaten the radishes, but failed to mark the cloud upon the eyes of Festus as he did so, Evander invited their opinion of matrimony.

“It is true,” he said, “that one sees more of a thing from outside than from within.

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Thus we do not ask a mite his opinion of cheese, or take our judgment of a pear from the maggot who dwells at its heart. Yet the mite and the maggot have their own intimate point of view, and the point of view is everything. Only by collating, comparing and contrasting points of view, do we arrive at the truth about any subject ; for truth herself is many-sided and from that effulgent jewel flash rays of rainbow light, that to Livia are purple, to Festus golden, to Evander emerald, or ruby. Thus knowledge is only reached by the combined experience of all men, and hence we find that a community, a city, a nation, is wiser than its chiefest citizen, subtler than its deepest philosopher, braver than its bravest soldier, and juster than its first lawgiver."

" Not here," said Livia. " You know more than all of us put together."

Evander raised his symmetrical hand for silence, for he resembled other great talkers and disliked being interrupted.

" Concerning marriage," he said, " we know

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that the institution descended from the gods to the patricians, and in process of time has now been extended to our plebeian selves. Whether the heathen and hyperboreans will ever receive and accept it, Jupiter alone can say. It is enough for us that we have marriage, and I feel profound confidence that if we enter the state in a humble spirit, as learners ; if we trust the gods ; if we give and take, and recognise that women are honourable creatures and the complement of men, created, as it were, for his completion—if we honestly recognise that the weaker sex is necessary—nay, vital—and therefore worthy of that honour we extend to all necessary and vital things, then, as they create the home, minister to our comfort and provide the vase from which our sons and daughters shall bloom, we must accord our wives all respect and endearment. We must consider their requirements, treat them with affection and even admiration, if they prove meritorious. While they work for us, we must also work for them, so that home life shall be a beautiful and con-

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tented thing and the inspiration of the gods justified among men."

"In fact, you must treat them as you find them," suggested Festus, while Evander recovered his breath.

Festus was a mountain man of great physical strength and genial nature. He loved the ways of the hills and, lacking distinguished ideals, yet possessed a sense of justice and a generous and kindly nature. But, as many generous and kindly men, he did not deny himself the privileges he extended to others. He enjoyed the good things of life, when he could come at them, and his patron god was Bacchus. Too much a primitive to understand the higher branches of the Dionysian cult, or to grasp more than a little of all that mighty, and ever youthful divinity implies, he knew that he had given man the grape, that he smiled upon the poor and humble, and frowned not upon the joy of life.

Therefore he worshipped devoutly and explained to Livia that she must pray to Bacchus, who cared for all woodmen ; while she, from

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a general and not very lively religious sense, which sacrificed at any altars, now abandoned Venus, in deference to a general opinion that the Foam-born was not in her element on the married couch, and very properly accepted her husband's god.

But Livia had an emotional and volatile nature. Her god at this period of her young life was really none other than Festus himself. She owned an impulsive heart, considerable vanity and little judgment.

Evander proceeded and told them many things well worth knowing. His information appeared without limit and embraced the whole rule and conduct of married life, although he was a stranger to it.

You will have marked a characteristic touch, for while the wonderful young man began his discourse with a question, he had not stopped for Festus, or Livia, to answer it, but chose to do so himself—the mark of a great talker all the world over.

Presently Evander departed, and Festus, in his simple fashion, regretted that he had

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eaten Livia's radishes ; but she was happy at what she had heard and attached no importance to that incident.

"His words are music," she declared. "If we could remember but half of what he told us, how wise we should be!"

"And yet I'm sorry for him in a way," ventured Festus, as he picked up his axe and prepared to return to the forest.

"Sorry for him ! Surely never was a man for whom one had less to mourn," she explained.

"I am sorry for anybody who never laughs," declared Festus.

"He never sees anything to laugh at," declared Livia.

"Exactly—that's why I'm sorry for him. Even Jupiter laughs."

"But not Apollo," answered his wife, "and doubtless the true servants of Apollo imitate him in that matter."

"It may be so, my squirrel, but Bacchus does not frown on laughter and—well, there are times in a man's life when there is really nothing to do but laugh."

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“I hope we shall always laugh,” she said, “if it be not wrong. Yet they who laugh not are on a higher plane, even as the eagle is above the woodpecker. The woodpecker indeed laughs loud enough; but the eagle soars too near Apollo’s sun to find matter for laughter.”

“Give me the woodpecker,” answered Festus. “He is the bird of Mars and follows in the train of Bacchus. He was a king among men once on a time—a king of Latium—and Circe turned him into a bird, because he would not love her. So he has had his troubles like the least of us; but he does not forget to laugh at them.”

Meantime Evander went his way, cheered with that sense of well-doing which it was his daily privilege to enjoy.

Presently he met his father, Cornelius, returning from fishing. The old man looked hot and weary.

“I will carry those,” said Evander, taking a heavy string of lake trout.

“It would have been better still if you

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had helped me to catch them," answered Cornelius.

"I have been encouraging Livia and Festus," he replied.

"Get a wife yourself," returned his father. "We need a woman in our home."

III

APOLLO AND THE WOLVES

LIVIA ascended into the woods that she might bring Festus his dinner. She carried the food in a frail, and more than her husband's little skin of wine and pasty of baked meat she bore, for the girl had friends on the heights and brought a present for them in the rush basket.

Her way led five thousand feet upward to a green plateau. Here she rested for ten minutes and then climbed again.

Still higher, the crags of a mountain, with precipices round about it, ascended to a summit veiled in cloud. Streamlets leapt above the gorges and flung crystal threads into the air. They fell and their waters shouted to the hills, with echoes higher and higher, fainter and fainter, till they died away aloft and

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beneath. In the valleys there stared out rusty wounds on many woodlands. They marked where charcoal burners laboured, stripped the pelt of the brush and calcined it. A feather of smoke swung out beside these naked spaces and, above them, little homes of men clung together for protection against their loneliness. The tassels of the chestnut were breaking into blossom, mile upon mile ; white robinia hung out scented tresses and every dene and dingle was a feast of orange lilies and valley lilies, columbines and delicate white wood-rush. Far, far beneath, Larius lay, like a fragment of green silk thrown down between the mountains, and northward of the climber, the lesser waters of a little lake were cuddled under a hill and shone like a dark cat's eye.

And now Livia met her friends. While she reclined and let the wind from upper snows cool her forehead and dry the straying strands of hair upon it, there came a noise as of a flight of starlings. But they were feet, not wings, that made the sound, and there galloped

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to her, light-footed as a flock of kids, the Panisci, or little Pans. These fairy folk had horns and hooves, and tails no larger than a rabbit's scut. They stood eighteen inches high and were not loved of the people, for the rogues, though only baby fauns, were exceeding mischievous and delighted to pester human kind with pranks and practical jokes. They sent bad dreams, turned the milk sour and lured away the flocks upon the hills. Therefore wise women made friends of the imps and, though they won small service of them, at least escaped their persecution. Some believe that the Panisci are Pan's baby brothers ; but the more learned suspect they may be his children. It matters not.

Now their whimsical faces clustered round Livia and their little agate-coloured hooves trod on her toes.

“ Our cakes ! ” they cried, and so pushing were they, that the girl gave their leader a box on his prick ear and told him to behave himself. He wrinkled up his little flat nose and was going to cry, when she brought her gift

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from the basket and gave the faunlet a round cake made of millet and honey. So he forgot his tears and buried his bright yellow teeth in the dainty.

They laughed and stuffed till all the cakes were gone. Then they tumbled into her lap and climbed upon her back, and tickled her naked feet and asked her to make a game.

“I must take my husband his dinner,” she told them.

“Give it to us instead,” said the Panisci.

“You’re greedy pigs—all of you,” she declared. “I’m sure I don’t know why I love you.”

They looked at her with innocent yellow eyes; then two fell to fighting, and standing apart, butted at each other till the thud of their hard, little skulls sickened Livia.

“Stop it!” she ordered. “Come here and be good, and I’ll tell you a story.”

They loved a tale and clustered round her; but none heard a story that day. Suddenly from above, where the hill fell and a shaggy moraine hung, spread like a cloak, from the

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shoulders of the mountains, there came a very strange and melancholy sound. It echoed in the air and seemed also to creep over the earth—the ululation of a hundred hungry throats.

“Never mind that,” said the Panisci as Livia started up to fly, “it’s only the wolves.”

“All very well for you,” she answered, and her cheek grew pale. “They can’t hurt you, but they can eat me.”

Her hearers shouted with shrill laughter, for they had no hearts.

“We will stop and see Livia eaten by the grey wolves!” they said.

But one—from wisdom rather than sentiment—cast doubt on this hope.

“If they eat her, she will bring us no more cakes of millet and honey,” he told the rest.

Thus the gravity of the situation dawned upon them and they looked to the broken ground, over which already streamed a pack of hunting wolves. Escape was impossible, as it seemed.

“Pray to Apollo!” cried a faunlet. “The wolves are his beasts and in his keeping.”

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“ And climb up that rock before you pray,” directed another, who, though a baby, was not born yesterday. “ It will be easier for Phœbus to save you if you are out of reach of their teeth.”

Livia leapt up a solitary rock that, like a monolith, spurred on the hill, and the jaws of the wolf leader snapped vainly six inches below her right foot. But her husband’s dinner was gone in an instant, and the Panisci danced and screamed with delight as the wolves bit into the wine-skin and the red wine dabbled their noses. They shook their muzzles and sneezed, for they were not wine drinkers ; then, with the patience of savage beasts, which is one of the things which makes them so horrible to impatient humanity, they squatted panting round the rock to wait for Livia. Her perch was precarious ; her strength would not enable her to hang on for many minutes ; and the wolves, to whom time was nothing and dinner everything, took their stations for the banquet. If dinner turned into supper, or even resolved itself into break-

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fast, it mattered not. Here was a dainty dish, worth waiting for.

The wolf leader spoke: "All women are liars," he declared. "Only last week I passed a cottage where a child was crying, and heard the mother say she would fling it to the wolf if it made that noise again. So I sat down to wait, and presently, when the babe wept more loudly than before, I lifted my voice at the threshold and said, 'Behold, I am here, madam.' But did I get the baby? No. I only had a red-hot brand from the fire across my snout. There is no truth in the creatures."

"Pray to Apollo," shouted Livia's friends. "And he will rescue you if he has time."

"Alas, I worship Bacchus," she answered, hugging the rock.

"Apollo may not know it," they replied.

The wolves lifted their steel-bright eyes to her. Some rested their noses between their front paws, like watching dogs; some scratched themselves; one bit at a thorn in his foot. And Livia called upon the Delphic god to save her.

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The response was practically instantaneous. Light suddenly burned from a myrtle thicket fifty yards away—a clear, ineffable fulgency that expanded every way, like a mighty star. Then, in the midst of it, they saw the god's celestial form, as it had been a man made of purest silver. He raised his bow arm, an arrow flashed singing through the air and the leader of the wolf pack leapt and fell dead, shot through his heart. He quivered in every limb, gave one great sigh and was still, while the blood trickled from his side.

The faunlets jumped for joy, while the dead wolf's companions, mad with terror, tumbled over each other to be gone, and vanished in a grey stream, like turbid waters running up hill. The Panisci followed them, for they disliked Apollo, who was not fond of children.

The god approached and gave Livia a divine hand to help her down. His glorious face was the colour of ivory; his wide eyes were blue as the noon sky; golden curls crowned his broad and beautiful brow. His mouth was

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firm and nobly modelled, and his expression majestic and changeless as marble. A ghost of the archaic smile haunted his countenance ; but it was not connected with any perception of humour. He drew his arrow from the wolf, replaced it in his quiver and unstrung his bow.

Livia fell on her knees and uttered thanksgivings. She blessed him for his mercy and prompt attention ; she commended his miraculous skill, and, allowing enthusiasm to outrun tact, she specially praised him for succouring one not of his fold.

A shadow passed over the divine forehead at her word.

“ Do you not, then, pray to me habitually ? ” he inquired, with a voice of music.

“ I pray to Bacchus,” she answered, and Apollo frowned.

“ Why ? ” he asked.

“ Bacchus is my husband’s god, Divine One, and it seemed good to him that we should adore at the same altar.”

“ One of those easy generalities which serve

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to conceal careless thinking," Phœbus answered coldly. " Bacchus is no god for women. His vogue is based on a crude pragmatism, Livia, and he relies for his success, not upon the strength, but the weakness of human nature. A god, even as a man, is judged by the company he keeps, and it should be enough for mortals to know that, behind his parade of creature comforts and profession of good fellowship and conviviality, there lurks in my half-brother a very ugly customer. Bacchus is no friend to the mortal race and his boasted gift does a great deal more harm than good. You were better without it; but such is his jealousy, that those among you who appreciate this truth and seek to decline the grape, he forgives not. His motives are far other than you imagine, for he plots to see all mankind bound to him in the tendrils of the vine, which, weak as infant hands at first, grow gradually stronger till they hold the accursed weed to the trellis and defy the storm to break it down. How different my service! How superior my appeal!"

“I will tell Festus,” faltered Livia. “He is a very sensible man and would not willingly worship danger.”

“There is enough peril in the world without courting it,” answered the Lord of Light. “By all means tell him what I say; and if you would hear more concerning me, invite my servant, Evander, to your humble board.”

“Thankfully we will do your bidding, Mightiest One,” replied Livia; whereupon Apollo vanished, and the young wife, still trembling from her terrific adventure, hastened away to the forest. In half an hour she heard the sound of a woodman’s axe ringing not far distant, and soon discovered Festus destroying a great pine tree.

Two bacchants stood by, waiting for the russet-brown cones that would presently fall. But Festus was not in a good temper. For the first time in her life, Livia beheld that ruthless gleam which lights the eye of a hungry man, and heard the harsh accents that accompany hunger. In fact, Festus put his lady horribly in mind of the wolves. He greeted

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her with open annoyance, showed his teeth and asked for his dinner.

“ Fire-drakes and furies ! ” he cried, “ how much longer am I to earn your keep on an empty stomach ? ”

Her story, of course, appeased him, for he was a large-hearted woodman and loved Livia very dearly. He kissed her, lifted up his voice and thanked Bacchus devoutly for her escape ; upon which his wife reminded him that it was Apollo who had come to the rescue.

“ The Panisci bade me call upon him, because the wolves are his creatures,” she explained.

“ Bacchus would have been quite as quick ; and he wouldn’t have preached a sermon afterwards, but given you another dinner for Festus,” said a bacchant.

“ Of course,” declared Festus. “ He would, at least, have made good our wine-skin.”

“ I have seen him squeeze the grapes that wreathed his hair into the cup of a thirsty man,” added the bacchant. “ Did you ask Apollo about Daphne ? ”

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“ Certainly not,” replied Livia. “ One is not familiar with the gods.”

“ Some like it,” answered the bacchant. “ Jove both makes and takes jokes.”

“ I have never seen Apollo,” said Festus. “ What is he like ? ”

Livia considered, then a happy illustration occurred to her.

“ He is like a glorified Evander,” she answered. “ He speaks like Evander, and has the same intensely serious and lofty expression. The god thinks very highly of Evander, for he told me so.”

Festus made a face which Livia slightly resented.

“ The Shining One has saved my life, at any rate,” she said, “ so you must pardon me if I am grateful.”

“ I am grateful too,” he replied ; then with a few final strokes of his axe, he flung down the great stone pine. It trembled like a sentient thing and seemed to throw up its aged arms to the heaven above ; then slowly, majestically, it left the place that it had occu-

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pied for a hundred years, swung away and descended in thunder. The huge earthward limbs were cracked off like twigs, as it crashed down ; the solid ground shook at the impact ; overhead there broke a naked space of blue sky and a thousand little things that had lived in eternal twilight beneath the pine now felt direct sunshine upon their leaves and fainted. Not till the return of darkness and nightly dews did they recover their senses.

The bacchants plucked the cones until they had sufficient, then they went their way, practising a dithyrambic chant. Livia offered to hasten home and fetch Festus more food ; but he held his day's work done and accompanied her down the mountain-side.

For a time neither spoke ; then Festus voiced the matter in Livia's mind so accurately, that she felt something like a blush upon her cheek and turned her face from him.

She had been wondering in the depth of her young soul whether, after all, Apollo might not be a better god to follow than Bacchus. She felt that he was eminently

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trustworthy, prodigiously powerful. And it was clear that he did not admire Bacchus. He was older than the god of the grape and doubtless wiser. She did not think of herself alone ; she considered the moral requirements of Festus, and idly wondered whether, in the time to come, her husband might rise to greater things and a worthier pattern of life if he sacrificed at the altar of the Light-Bringer and left Bacchus for other men.

Here he interrupted her.

“ You understand that it is not necessary to trouble your head any more about Apollo,” he said. “ We have agreed to worship Bacchus and, for my part, I find him a good friend and a staunch deity, who demands no impossible sacrifices and is content if I am happy. Wine suits me. I am the better for it. I have a disposition naturally cheerful, and Bacchus openly tells us that as long as we do our duty, treat our fellow-man honestly, and pay our way, the less we think about the gods, the better. The great thing, if you are a mortal, is to mind your own business, and let the gods

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mind theirs. Of course, if we are their business, then they will mind us. I don't know anything about that. But the gods certainly help those who help themselves. That is what the Panisci meant when they told you to climb the rock first and call on Apollo afterwards. It is a woodlander's business to fell trees, and if he stands in the way of the falling trunk, not Faunus or Silvanus will save his skull ; nor does Neptune heed the cry of the sailor who goes to sea with rotten sails and a cracked mast. The gods know their business, and they also know ours. And when they punish us, it is generally because we have failed of ours. Come now and feed me, for I am starving. Then together we will pray to Bacchus."

She did not answer ; but you cannot speak with a god and pass it off as a matter of no significance. Livia, though her feelings were not deep, became deeply influenced by her adventure. To see the celestials at that stage in the world's history was no astounding matter, for they came and went among men

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and women, to human joy or sorrow, and brought life, or death, as the case might be ; but Livia had actually spoken with a most exalted divinity and the magic and wonder of him were, for the moment, heavy upon her heart.

She yearned to worship him, but she concealed her desire from Festus. Circumstances unfortunately conspired to accentuate her longing and she felt an overmastering impulse to follow it.

There was, of course, much to be said for this apparent conversion ; but it promised to make life exceedingly difficult, not only for her—she was going to have the centre of the stage to comfort her—but also for her husband, a man of fixed ideas and simple but most steadfast religious opinions.

IV

THE SELFISH OREAD

CARMENTA, the mother of Livia, called at the forge of Fabius, the smith, who was accounted a wise man, when he chose to be wise. He and Carmenta had been very good friends in the past; indeed Livia was their daughter, and the mother thought that Fabius might now reasonably use his brains on the young woman's behalf.

But the forge lay a mile from the village, so that the sparks that were wont to fly above it should not set fire to the reed roofs. Carmenta, therefore, had to walk a mile and climb a little hill also before she reached it.

Stopping to rest at the summit of this knap, she fell in with an oread, one of those nymphs who dwell in the woodland. Carmenta felt

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no surprise, for the oreads would often consult men and women about their own simple affairs ; they were immortal maidens with more beauty than intellect.

Now the oread stopped Carmenta and begged a favour.

“ I have a lesson and pray you hear it,” she said.

“ Do you do lessons ? ” asked the old woman, and listened while the other explained.

“ To-morrow I am to recite one of my poems before Bacchus. For I am a poet and the nymphs have told him about me, so he has bidden me rehearse before him. Naturally one wishes to shine on such an occasion, and I have invented a very long and beautiful poem ; but to learn it by heart was almost too much for me. I have wearied my friends with it and now I begin to doubt if it is as perfect as I thought. For if an artist dwells overlong with her own creation, a time comes when she grows uneasy and discovers only an increasing number of faults. But it will come freshly to

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your ear, and you may do me a great kindness and hearten my sinking spirit, if you can honestly say that you like the poem, and think it worthy to be heard by Bacchus."

"Drat Bacchus!—it's Bacchus here, there and everywhere," said Carmenta, much to the oread's surprise.

"Bacchus is a mighty and glorious god," she answered; "and if by good chance my verses please him, he will reward me and perhaps permit me to join his train and take my place among his joyful companions."

"There are too many gods," answered Carmenta flatly. "How on earth is a poor body to decide among them which shall be worshipped and obeyed?"

"You pay your devotion and you take your choice," replied the oread. "One should not decide in a hurry, but, having decided, it is well to be faithful, for the gods little like a follower to desert them, and the goddesses never forgive it."

"Women ought to worship the goddesses in my opinion," asserted Carmenta. "After

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we have done with Venus, who does not desire to see old people at her altars, then let us pray to Minerva and stick to her. I am troubled about my daughter, Livia. However, that won't interest you and you couldn't throw any light upon it. So tell your poetry and I'll listen. But I warn you that I don't know anything whatever about poetry."

"Few do, but that doesn't prevent everybody from criticising it," answered the oread. "Once you were young and you loved, so you have lived poetry whether you knew anything about it or not—indeed, all humans do. They live better poetry than they can write, in fact, and if the least of you were able or willing to set down his life, great poetry would appear ; but you are too self-conscious. His self-consciousness comes between the mortal artist and his work, so that he can never attain perfection. Even gods are self-conscious, too, for that matter ; but not the greatest. They say Jupiter is writing a poem for Juno ; though it is much more likely to be for somebody else."

"Get on," directed Carmenta. "The dusk

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is down and I cannot stay here all night listening to your chatter."

Thus directed, the oread put her hands behind her, frowned, looked up at the trees and began the poem she had written for Bacchus.

"It is called 'Friend of the Night,'" she said, then proceeded in this manner.

Another Night arrived on earth
After the immemorial way.
She followed a tempestuous Day
Strangled and stricken from his birth.

The Queen of Darkness held her breath
To hear the thunder on the height.
Her diadem was forked blue light :
It seemed she brought not sleep but death.

"Alas ! alas ! my little reign,"
She cried. "My loyal subjects dear
Will hide away for dread and fear
And I shall woo them all in vain.

The grey wolf pack will never roam ;
The badger folk will never rise,
With lemon streaks and ruby eyes,
From out the holt they call their home.

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Old russet fox sulks in his earth ;
The coney people all lie low,
For fur is better dry, they know,
Even at cost of nightly mirth.

My nightingale has gone to bed ;
My goatsucker brings not his churn
To secret places in the fern ;
My corncrake might as well be dead.

The barn-owl's lady hates a storm ;
To stay at home she'll think it best,
Spreading her wings upon the nest,
Keeping her little children warm.

And humankind, to whom the light
Or dark's all one for work or play,
Will not a moment now delay
As through the thunderstorm they fight.

No scented bloom can smile for me,
Nor sphinx-moth dip within its cup,
For every petal's close shut up
Against the weather's villainy.

No golden moon will glad my eyes ;
No star upon my forehead shine,
Or in my hair a diamond twine ;
No greenwood sing my lullabies.

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No gentle magic, no sweet sleight
Of dreaming dew, or gleaming lake,
A single kindly thought will take
For such a fury of a Night.

A troubled memory I speed,
Storm-foundered, sorrowful, unblest.
Because I bring the world no rest,
I am a friendless Night indeed."

Forlorn she came unto a dell,
And wandering there with rain-wet face
In all her unbehonden grace,
A sudden happy thing befell.

For Glow-worm, plodding through the grass
Within that dingle sad and damp,
Met Night, and lit a golden lamp
Out of respect to see her pass.

That such a tiny soul should see
Her loneliness, should know her name
And greet the Presence with a flame,
Made Night go much more cheerfully.

She praised the humble traveller,
Who shone and shone with all her might.
A smile irradiated Night,
And even thus she spoke to her.

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“ Since me, my little one, you’ve kenned,
I’ll set your spark upon my breast,
Choosing you for my dearest, best,
And, to be frank, my only friend.

And when far gentler Nights renew
The darkness and my tale is told,
Tell them I blessed your lamp of old,
And that I thought the world of you.”

To dawn she passed ; another sun
Leapt o’er the earth in lurid might,
And Glow-worm, putting out her light,
Went home well pleased with what she’d done.

The oread proved word-perfect, but did not recite her poem well. It was rather a sing-song performance.

“ A little incident I observed myself during the last great thunderstorm,” she explained.
“ How does it strike you, Carmenta ? ”

“ It’s overlong,” answered the washer-woman, “ and you drone it out like a bee sucking clover ; but I dare say, if you were to hurry up and drop out about half of it, they’ll let you finish.”

“ Cold comfort,” said the oread sadly.

“Perhaps, however, it might really be better if I gave Bacchus something short.”

“Be sure it would,” answered Carmenta. “Of course time is nothing to you immortal creatures—time is only made for slaves, like us—but it’s better not to run the risk of boring a god. Good evening.”

The oread, however, was already so busy considering her other poems, that she did not acknowledge the salute, or thank the human woman who had thus patiently listened to her. In fact, she was a true minor poet to the marrow in her immortal bones.

Carmenta proceeded to Fabius, who had put out his fire and was sitting at his door eating his supper. He shared with her the best that he had, and they munched and drank together without speech for a time. Then she told him her errand.

“Our daughter is in grief,” she said.

“So soon?” asked Fabius. “I feared that her marriage might be a failure, but did not think to hear of trouble yet.”

“It is not marriage, but religion,” ex-

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plained Carmenta. “ The god of Festus was to have been the god of Livia also, for so it seemed best and Festus willed it. Now, alas ! our daughter finds that she must worship Apollo. But Festus does not like Apollo, and Livia dare not tell him what has happened to her.”

“ A plague on the gods !—there are as many as flies in a marsh,” said Fabius.

“ But one must have a god. To have none is to be friendless ; though to pay court at all their altars is to fritter away your prayers and be heard of nobody.”

“ Let her pray to Apollo in secret then.”

“ Bacchus would know it. He is a kindly god, but does not pardon deceit.”

“ Put it to Festus. A woman must be happy, or she will take good care that her unhappiness pours over into her home. Festus is not hard to please—a very good, amicable man and pays me well for his axes. Let Livia tell him that she must worship Apollo, or become a nuisance. Then he will make no difficulty.”

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“ So I thought,” answered Carmenta. “ But it is not so. If Livia worship Apollo, there will be much difficulty—not of her making but her husband’s. He adores Bacchus and already suspects his wife. Festus is religious, and his faith will turn him from Livia and kill his love for her, if she does not share it.”

“ He loves her much, however,” declared the smith. “ He was here but three days ago and told me that he had not known what it was to live until he wedded our daughter. By the same token he blessed Bacchus very heartily for sending him such a bride. He also gave it as his opinion that marriage was a blessing and that he felt thankful he had not lived too soon to enjoy the state.”

“ Can we do anything ? ”

Fabius considered.

“ We can be hopeful,” he replied. “ The Lares are stronger than the Larvæ, even as good conquers evil. But this is one goodness against another goodness. What has turned Livia so obstinately religious ? You and I

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were—well, these things did not make life a burden ; nor was it so with her before she wedded.”

“ She has seen and spoken with Apollo.”

“ Then let her see and speak with Bacchus. He may persuade her, if he thinks it worth while ; or, better still, let Festus seek his god. Bacchus demands no worship that is half-hearted. Yet I am puzzled, for Livia was not of the frosty spirits. Otherwise she had not loved Festus, who has always enjoyed the good things of earth when he could get them. Livia loved laughter and gaiety. She danced and sang and had no unkind word for anybody. Now, having won the man she loves, it ill becomes her to change her mood and seek a god whose service lies heavy on simple folk of the field. Apollo wins the wise people and those who love the fruit of the brain—those who, being able to choose, prefer the way of austerity and self-denial. These things count to them for righteousness, because they could enjoy purple and fine linen and the fat of the land if they desired to do so ; but for us, who

live harshly, who deny ourselves from necessity and are not heroes and heroines for so doing—for us, Carmenta, Apollo is an affectation. Let Bacchus and Faunus, Pomona and Juturna be our friends. They at least bring gifts that the poor can understand.”

“We might split the difference and get Livia to pray to Volcanus—your god—as you and I were wont,” suggested Carmenta. “It is, I think, only against Apollo that Festus entertains such antipathy.”

“Leave it alone and see what they make of it,” advised the smith. “In marriage I understand the woman is servant to her lord. I know not how that may result, but we shall see.”

Carmenta left Fabius and returned homeward. She was troubled and preoccupied with her daughter’s affairs, when the poetical oread accosted her again.

“You thought my last effusion too lengthy,” she said; “then you can sit upon that stone for a while, and I will recite an earlier work that has been much admired by my friends.”

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But to the oread's astonishment, she received a chilly answer.

"Not again," replied Carmenta. "You want everything for nothing, like a good many other people. I am kind to the kindly ; but where kindness is not recognised or acknowledged, I can be flint. Where kindness is taken for granted, it becomes weakness to offer it. In future, when people devote their precious time to your pleasure, at least remember to thank them ; and when people bid you a friendly farewell, do no less than echo it. Be gracious to the gracious ; and because you happen to make verses, think not that the need for courtesy is ended."

Carmenta went on her way and the oread felt much too surprised to reply.

"If one rehearses poems before a washerwoman, one has only oneself to thank for insolence," she reflected. "But it was ever so. When the artist bends, common persons are prone to take advantage. It is their brutal opinion, apparently, that the poet who invites their views, puts himself in an inferior posi-

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tion. By virtue of criticism, the critic conceives of himself as sitting in the judgment-seat, while the creator, forsooth, stands at the bar. In future I will only ask my peers for criticism ; though unfortunately one's peers have seldom a kind or generous word to say of one. It is their wont to look coldly upon your achievements and return, with a secret sigh of relief, to the things that they have made themselves."

V

FAUNUS

NOW did Livia, while rejoicing in the love of Festus, none the less terribly wound him. She was a happy woman, but like so many happy women, could not leave well alone, even when she found the peril of trying to make well better. She met Evander and told him that an impulse drove her to Apollo. Naturally he—a devout bachelor—encouraged her greatly and said that, not for twenty husbands, must she set aside the glorious inspiration that had come upon her. But he did not analyse the inspiration ; he praised her heartily and his applause exalted Livia in her own opinion. Not content with loving Festus, she must now needs fall in love with herself ; and, as though the dignity of wifehood were not enough, she aspired to

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the smile of fame. It was a foolish ambition in a happy girl, who did not yet know her good fortune, and it sprang from a defect of character, for which Livia was presently called to pay the price. It is probable that had not her impulse to do something out of the common sprung from Apollo, it must have blossomed, late or soon, from another source. At any rate a certain restless factor in the wife of Festus now cried out for change before she had grasped the blessing of stability, and the words of Evander affirmed her in error and led to tribulation.

Another than Festus might have made light of it ; even he under different circumstances would have had little to say. But he mistrusted Apollo, who had slain more than one of his friends for their indiscretions, and when Livia presently informed him of her intention henceforth to worship the God of the Sun, Festus made it a personal matter and forbade her.

She persisted and declared her faith no matter for a husband's interference. He

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found her placing flowers upon the altar of Apollo and beat her and drove her home.

“ Fire-drakes and furies ! ” he cried. “ Shall the woman I have wedded insult me to my face, and pray to one who has slain my friends with his accursed arrows ? ”

She wept and tasted the fruit of martyrdom.

“ I am your wife and we have been happy,” she answered ; “ but your cruel blows banish happiness from my heart for ever. I know now that there are greater things than happiness. It was a hard saying on the lips of Evander ; but he spoke the truth. Beat me if you will, Festus—you cannot beat patience and fortitude and faith from my heart.”

Thus he turned his wife into a tragedy queen, and from being a jolly and laughing lass, who loved his embraces and would rather have sat upon his lap than the throne of the Empress, he saw the new Livia—unsmiling, sublimely patient, and with already a hint of that self-righteousness which is often born in those who follow the Apollonian way.

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He wept to her and prayed for forgiveness. She dried his tears and forgave him instantly. She spent all her time forgiving him and in secret felt much gratification at the heights on which she began to move. She displayed the zeal and fervour of the proselyte, while Festus tried, as far as a rough woodman might, to keep his temper with her. Sometimes he succeeded, sometimes he failed ; and he knew that each failure was another ray in Livia's new crown of glory. He strove with her and did what his warm heart prompted to win her back to him. But it was in vain and his patience gave out at last. As he truly remarked, he had married the old Livia, not the new one.

He beat her sometimes in public, and since it was a new thing for a man to strike a woman before the people, a stranger travelling beside the lake, who saw this sad spectacle, asked what it meant. "They are married," answered the folk. It became a familiar saying, so that when a man evilly entreated a woman, it was assumed that they were one.

FAUNUS

Finally Festus determined to seek Bacchus and beg him to throw light upon the situation. Indeed, he started to do so, for Bacchus might often be found with his train about the vine-lands at this season, and when he was in the neighbourhood, the genial riot of his retinue could be heard for miles on a still night, while their torches made a blaze in the forest darkness.

But it happened that the woodman's purpose was changed, for he fell in with Hope, a youthful goddess whom to meet was always accounted good fortune. Spes wore a light robe of crocus colour, through which her pearly skin glimmered very beautifully. Upon her head was a wreath of purple gentians and golden arnica that she had gathered in the hills ; while in her hand she carried a bud of orange lily. For it was her custom to bear a bud only, never an open flower. Therefore an unopened blossom is the symbol of young Hope, since her sovereignty lies over the future. The past is past and the present fulfils itself and is the past before we can

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name it ; but none may tell what lies in the shut bud of future time, and none knows whether it will open pure and perfect, or whether already the invisible worm lies within.

Spes knew all about Festus and Livia ; indeed she was here to intercept the woodman on his way.

“ Be advised,” she said ; “ remember that while there is life, there is Hope. Go back and strive yet again to prevail with Livia by kind words and good sense. She loves you, and it were a grievous thing that your lives should be spoiled by these differences. It is always dangerous to call in the high gods, and though Bacchus is gentle as well as terrible, he would, I think, be the first to advise you to exercise patience and give Hope a trial.”

“ It is just because I hadn’t any hope left that I was going to him,” answered Festus ; “ but now I breathe the air of Hope very willingly and will do as you tell me. I have no desire to push myself into the notice of my god if it can be helped, and gladly take

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your advice. You are the goddess of To-morrow, and I will trust to-morrow for a little while, even though to-day be a failure. I love Livia with all my heart, and where there is Love, no doubt there should be Hope also."

"To love without Hope is the saddest trial that faces mortal man," answered Spes. Then she left him, that she might take her message elsewhere, and Festus, cheered at this meeting, held it of good augury and returned to his home in an amiable and sanguine spirit.

Meantime Livia had taken a walk beside the Larian lake, for the evening hour invited to the air, and so still was it that the twilight star mirrored herself in the water, while the splash of oars could be heard a mile distant, as the fishermen returned to shore.

Livia had made supper ready for her husband and then, walking beside Larius, she met Evander, who was standing in an attitude of contemplation at the brink of the lake.

They conversed together and he made the

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evening hour still more beautiful by the elevation and dignity of his sentiments. Livia's heart beat with pride that he should thus devote his exalted mind to her, and she strove to rise to the occasion and prove worthy of such a privilege. It proved a strain, but a strain that women can generally bear, for they have an art to appear wiser than they are, and use silence so cunningly that oftentimes, what is in truth their blankness, will be mistaken by the incautious for pregnant understanding. They know that the silence of other people is golden in the ear of the egotist; for such men only ask for silence and love a good listener better than any created thing.

When she did speak, Livia answered what she knew he would like to hear—from intuition rather than conviction. And even while she said “Ah, yes,” and “Verily it is so,” and “You read my unspoken thought,” she suspected at the bottom of her young heart that she was not entirely honest in this attitude.

FAUNUS

Thus she deceived Evander utterly; herself, only in part.

“ You are a martyr,” he declared, “ and I reverence you. I feel, indeed, that we have much in common, and it is no small delight to me, who have worshipped Apollo from my childhood, to speak comfortable words in your ear and so help to sustain your new and precious faith. Be sure that what you endure is not hidden from Phœbus. The more you suffer, the deeper his solicitude. It may even happen to you, as to certain historic maidens, that you will rise to immortality by virtue of your persecution. In fact, if you are miserable long enough and Festus prove sufficient of a brute, your torments should ultimately win for you divine honours and recognition. It is not beyond the reach of hope, dear Livia, that you may some day be turned into a flower, or star, and your name thus associated with an immortal object, to the wonder and admiration of mankind.”

“ Festus will never be as horrible as all that,” she answered with conviction. “ I feel,

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having you to succour me, noble Evander, and heal my bruised spirit with the ointment of your words, that I can endure all things while life remains to me ; but, as a matter of fact, though a passionate creature, my husband is not of the stuff to make a tyrant.”

“ He is a stubborn and obstinate man without high principles,” replied the other. “ He may rise to tyranny if Bacchus inspire him. Be firm and bate no jot of your convictions. Remember that my eyes are on you and that Apollo knows. Had it pleased the gods to waken love in our hearts, how different must have been your future—aye, and mine also ! For I perceive in your steadfast courage and clear-eyed outlook upon reality, a reflection of my own best qualities.”

“ I thank you, wisest of men,” she replied. “ I would rather hear you say that than change places with the Star of Evening. Your words will echo in my heart at its saddest moments ; they will make my footsteps firm, when they totter under the weight of affliction ; they will be a beacon when I am storm-

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foundered, and a tower of strength wherein to hide when most I seek salvation."

Her voice was melodious and she really spoke with a thrill of conviction. She almost believed herself, and, of course, Evander did not for an instant doubt. Her reply, indeed, pleased him heartily. He was not an emotional person, but in his response came as near emotion as ever he had in his life.

"What might have been!" he said. Then, feeling the dramatic climax reached, cast about for an effective phrase at parting. But Livia had even a finer sense of drama than he, for women possess a perfect instinct in this matter denied to men. She felt that the last word should be with her, and rising still higher, an inspiration of dramatic fitness whispered that no spoken word could better the situation now attained. Indeed, more words would mar it. She knelt, therefore, kissed his hand and then hastened away, as swiftly as was compatible with effect.

Her departure was very beautiful and very convincing to all concerned, save one small

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corner of Livia's own heart wherein dwelt her real self. This, of late, she had sought to conceal; but while it was effectively hidden from everybody else—to their great mystification and amazement—it still peeped forth to Livia furtively. She grew colder and colder towards it, however, for she preferred to think that her true self had slept until the appeal of Phœbus.

Now elated and slightly hysterical, she wandered through the night and murmured “Evander! Evander!” Then she corrected herself and said “Apollo! Apollo!” But this did not sound so convincing, even when she told herself that it amounted to the same thing. She grew more calm presently and began to reflect.

Then, in a benignant light, that seemed to burn from within him, there came Pan the Pasturer, that blessed, primeval wood god, that figure for love and adoration, a deity apart, whose altar in man's spirit no other god can share. For worship what divinity you please, still must you revere Pan, the son of Hermes,

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the loved of herdsmen and hunters, the first and mightiest of the gods of nature. And because he is of nature, nature hides nothing from him, and her deepest secrets, including the heart of woman, he reads as an open book.

Livia knew him for Faunus, since that was the name he bore in Italy. She bent the knee to him and he stopped.

“Tell me,” said he, “is there a flame among yonder pine trees on the mountain, and do my ears hear the beat of a distant tympanon? Bacchus makes revel to-night and I go to keep him company.”

Livia looked up, where the shoulder of the hill loomed upon dying day. Already the woods were an amorphous mass of darkness, but in their midst, like a red eye, blinked fire. There came also the dull reverberation of a drum and the throb of cymbals far off.

“They are there, Mighty One,” she said, and he, looking upon her with kindly eyes, knew her better than she knew herself.

“And so young Livia, daughter of *Carmenta* and wife of *Festus*, doth ruminate upon

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Fame?" he asked, and she started to find her thoughts read so easily.

"There is no harm in that, my child, but beware of attempting the eagle's flight on a linnet's wings. Fame comes not by seeking, nor glory by taking thought. Renown steals to the side of him who knows it not. Nor is man a judge of Fame, to recognise her even when he sees her. At best she is little more than the thunder-clap that follows the lightning; and do not forget that the dead rather than the living concern her. He who inherits her authentic laurel knows no more about Fame than Death. He cares as little for either as the bronze, or marble that we lift to him cares for whom it stands. Not in the heart of the dead but the heart of the living does Fame exist. Yet it also happens that the mightiest, who, so their work for humanity be well and truly done, care not what man wins the fame, are in truth the only immortals, though forgotten of their kind. The gods themselves do reverence to such spirits.

"Consider, therefore, Livia, what phantom

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you pursue and the ambition that lurks in your heart. You desire to be linked with star or stream, forest tree or woodland flower, for ever ; so that mankind, when they mark the star, or pluck the blossom, shall say, ‘ This is Livia, the washerwoman’s daughter, who, for her sufferings on earth, was translated by the high gods and shines upon the sky, or smiles in the cyclamen, or strawberry.’ But remember that you yourself are gone before these things happen. All that you will know is the suffering and sorrow, and there must come a time when you will endure the additional grief of perceiving that the sorrow was home-made. Thus you will vanish with the bitterest doubt whether your life of grief was not in vain ; with the gravest fear that, after all, you may adorn no legend and win no posthumous honour of the gods. For Jupiter knows exceedingly well the difference between reality and make believe.

“ You are making believe, my dear girl, and that road reaches no flower of earth, or star of heaven. Therefore consider whether a happy

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home and a good husband are not better worth your pains than the futile renown of which you dream. Happiness is at your gates, and it is not a heroine but a fool who shuts the door on lawful happiness. I can speak impartially, for my altar robs no other of sacrifice or incense ; therefore I say that your husband's god is good, kindly and powerful. You will do well to worship him and, indeed, the maiden whom Festus loved and courted, if she remained true to herself, would be content to adore the god of her husband. Time will prove this to you, and my hope is that the proof may not be withheld until it is too late. Let me see a bunch of black and gold ophrys on my altar to-morrow, so that I may know you have not forgotten what I tell you."

Then he went his way, after Livia had thanked him for his wisdom ; though in truth she twisted it somewhat to suit her own dreams.

For now she began herself to see that the immortality of star, or wayside weed, was but a doubtful delight to a living woman. She

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remembered that the joy of life, as expounded by Festus before they were married, had appealed to her exceedingly, and she came to suspect that present happiness might be better worth than future fame. She wondered, as we all so often wonder, whether there was any way to eat her cake and have it also ; whether she might not get the best out of both worlds.

She forgot Faunus and set her mind upon Evander. For she believed that the way to Apollo led through him and that, with him, might dawn a brighter, temporal happiness than any that Festus could promise. Life would surely blossom with flowers and run over emerald grasses if walked beside Evander.

“ What might have been ! ” he had said, and Livia returned home much heartened by the reflection that what might have been, might still be. Better, surely, to join the disciple of Apollo than link a dead name to a star after a lifetime of suffering with Festus. There were, of course, difficulties ; but she

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had set up for heroine, and where is the heroine who cannot conquer difficulties?

Thus Faunus certainly influenced her ; but not in the direction he designed. It happens so with much advice, for we are lightning quick to pick from the mass of other people's wisdom what appears to chime with our own. And we are extraordinarily dishonest in this matter and wrest advice from its context, or twist counsel far from the original bent.

VI

A SAD CHAPTER

THIS is a chapter so unhappy that it shall be as short as possible, for who loves to dwell on the sorrows of other people if he cannot lessen them? Art, a wise man said, is with us that we shall not perish of too much truth; then let Art be with us, to wipe the tears that truth so often brings, and so help us and save us from altogether weeping away our vitality and slight value to the world.

Frankly, Livia's life at this crisis was art, for we are all artists once, and our principal work, which is our own existence, though it may look fine enough to ourselves and our admirers, seldom satisfies any independent critic, or is lived in terms of sufficient distinction to make a masterpiece. Here and there

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we know that a king, or tinker, has achieved mastery and left something completely beautiful ; but the sovereignty comes from within ; it is born of the mingled strands a man's fore-fathers have spun, so that if we understood the mystery of procreation, we might predict that given such and such sires and grandsires, greatness should result.

Herein the gods fail to the superficial eye, and thoughtless men doubt whether they are doing their best for our race while the generations continue to be so mediocre. These mistaken philosophers argue that the potential materials of superman and super-woman lie all around us, but that love, or ambition, convenience, or policy, are allowed to mix the ingredients and so practically negative all chance of greatness. In truth, of course, this is a blessing ; for if all were wise there would be no wisdom ; if all were great, no greatness. Therefore be sure the gods still know their business in this matter and give us quite as many heroes and heroines as are good for us.

But the quality of heroism is not one which

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we can determine in our own case ; and, as a rule, the man who feels a sense of majestic suffering, majestically borne, is making an ass of himself.

Livia now suffered a great deal, for the advice of Spes to Festus produced no lasting results. He was, indeed, as patient as his nature permitted ; but he could not bear up against his wife's obvious enjoyment of martyrdom : it proved a trial too great for this simple and amiable man to endure.

Things therefore went from bad to worse and, in the vernacular, it was common talk that the young couple lived a cat-and-dog life.

And Evander, conscious of it, began to pend. He was an excellent and high-minded person and knew many useful things ; but the workings of a woman's heart pertained to a branch of learning beyond him. This was natural in one of his predilections, for Apollo himself cannot read hearts as old Faunus, and though Faunus too frightens mankind sometimes, his panic terror springs from far other sources than that bewilderment so often

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inspired by the God of Day. Indeed, it may be argued that so-called panic terror is only another name for conscience.

But it was small wonder that Evander did not understand Livia, for Livia did not understand herself. She could not analyse her emotions and assign them to their true source and inspiration. Evander believed that nothing but the most exalted religious conviction now led Livia to suffer, and Livia may have been of the same opinion while she did not think about it. But they were, of course, both royally wrong. Clouds sometimes accompanied the woman's glory of mind, yet they were so tinged with the glory, that she perceived them not. She was true to herself, and since herself was at present false, her truth itself was falsity. Even her real love for Festus faded a little before his roughness, though she knew that it was his love that made him rough. She could not deny that he was quite as attached to Bacchus as she herself to Apollo, and as for his hard words and hard blows, since they made her so attractive and sympathetic

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an object, she had no real quarrel with them. Her martyrdom produced a vigorous crop of the weed we call spiritual pride. Much spurious excitement entered into the situation, and it became intensified when Evander, dazzled by her display and quite furious at her domestic sufferings, which lost little on her lips, began to formulate a mighty conclusion concerning her.

His motives may also have been a little mixed. She was a challenge to his heroism ; through her he might advance upon his own steep path to those heights beyond the reach of common men. He considered whether he should not now notably rescue Livia from her woodman and be to her a helpmate worthy of her unusual character and attainments. He determined to put the question before Apollo, and even told Livia that he was going to do so.

Her heart sank, but she applauded his resolution and assured him of obedience to the divine mandate, whatever it might be.

Thus they unconsciously deceived them-

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selves and one another. They believed that they loved with a pure, religious flame and felt confident that they must offer to the people an illuminating spectacle of elevated marriage in its highest exposition ; while stark truth pointed to the contrary and asserted that the true Evander was not endowed by nature to make a satisfactory husband for any woman, and that the real Livia least of all could hope for happiness in his arms. Lack of humour combined with a steadfast instinct for the limelight disqualify a man from shining on the hearth of home ; yet, even while Livia knew this well enough, she thirsted for the renown of Evander's love ; she felt, not, indeed, answering love, but a slave-like gratitude for his magnanimity and feminine pride in her success, which she mistook for love.

VII

APOLLO AND EVANDER

AMOUNTAIN, whose summits and topmost glens were deep in snow, rose, rent and jagged, to one brooding cumulus that hung above it, and curled on the blue like a silver dragon. Presently the cloud furled its pinions and settled on the peak.

Apollo dismounted and waited for his servant Evander, who came to speak with him.

All the sky was radiant azure ; but beneath it one great passage of shadow spread across the sunlit snow and rippled, as it rose and fell to the contours of the land. There life fought for a place on the uplifted earth and a thin, sore-stricken pinewood fretted the snow ; but beneath, at gentler altitudes, many a green thing grew more happily, and whole forests basked against the spurs and crags,

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that broke from their verdancy to buttress the mountain crowns. Here fell precipices until the lower hills caught them, where hung little plateaux and nestled fertile slopes on the ledges of stone. Then, by a thousand declivities, there spread and oozed through every valley and beneath every height the work of man—terrace upon terrace, step upon step.

Now the trellises of his vines made a splendour of every knap and knoll, and his olives wound their orchards, like a grey veil, round the throats of the old, wrinkled hills. And breaking from the rolling green, like wedges of brown honeycomb, his hamlets and villages clung and congregated about little altars of the gods. Here chestnuts lifted their brightness to the girdle of the pines ; here again swung out some great marble cliff to distribute the awful burden of the mountain.

Sunk in the midst of an immense cup, whose broken rim was the snow-clad peaks, whose sides were chased and fretted with forests and steep places, jewelled with men's homes, glorified with the verdure of June,

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there spread the Larian lake ; and round it, like bright shells scattered on a beach, other hamlets clustered.

The hymn of Light was being sung over Italy. Great cloud masses lumbered beneath the zenith and discharged their burden of reflected brightness into Larius ; for light rather than rain they bore and their splendour was mirrored in the waters beneath them, to kill the blue with brightness. This effulgent vision spread upon the face of the lake, and currents of wind also touched it until the deep fluttered into transitory darkness at their pressure.

The last enchanter to move upon Larius was shade, and, as wonderful as the reflections of the light, there roamed over the water wine-purple shadows of the high clouds. They seemed ponderable and sank from the surface to stain the depths ; while amid their patterns and tinctures of lapis lazuli, the sun shone directly and woke rich blues and emerald greens, that set the shadow shapes in a network of brilliant enamels and followed their

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changing outlines as they dislimned and passed again.

Magical was the sleight that shadows played with the shore also. They flew over forests and mountains like a flock of great-winged birds ; they hid whole villages beneath their gloom and then, lifting, revealed the vanished homesteads again, aglow in the sunlight.

Yet all this detail and harmonious splendour was as nothing to the incarnate spirit of light that gave birth to it. Light quickened noon and throbbed through the veins of the earth-mother. From cloud to mountain, from mountain to the least flower that dwelt thereon, the spirit forgot nothing. It swept land and lake and sky with a presence like a bloom—a blessed aura that crowned all things in earth and heaven ; an ineffable glory of melting, magic blue, that soaked through matter and spread Demeter's own veil of violet and gentian, between Persephone and every eye that might gaze and grow dim at sight of her.

The God of Day was well pleased and his

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solemn eyes rested upon the world, where it rolled at his immortal feet and uttered a thanksgiving for his gift of sunshine. Then came Evander and made obeisance.

“Your situation is known to me,” said Apollo; “you need not, therefore, be at the trouble to rehearse it. I may tell you frankly that I do not always see at one with the Supreme. Jupiter is my father, and he would be the last to say that I am not a worthy son; but, as with gods so with men: the seed of one man, or woman, will blossom into both weeds and flowers, and who can tell why this boy is a saint and his brother a rascal; this boy a genius, that one first cousin to an idiot? We only know it is the will of Jupiter and must leave it at that. With gods, I repeat, this law of nature holds. Were not Bacchus and I both begotten of the Highest? I need not pursue the illustration.”

He paused awhile and followed his thoughts in silence. Then he returned to Evander.

“Your case has occasioned a difference of opinion among us, and I find myself in a

minority. That, however, is no new experience for me. It is enough that my august sister, Diana, sees with my eyes. Indeed, she usually reflects my highest thought, even as the moon reflects the sun upon her bosom. We are agreed concerning your affair, and when we agree, the opposition of other divinities seldom causes us any uneasiness. There is no question but that our servant, Livia, must leave this boor, her husband. Faithful as he is to Bacchus, it follows that he can be no spouse for any disciple of mine. Certain cynical gods, who entertain less hope of your race than I do, have hinted that this woman is deluding herself and you ; but fear not. It is enough that I do not think so ; it is enough that I see her associated with you as my active servant, ardent disciple and steadfast follower. Any disposition to backsliding, did such occur, will be your affair to control and combat. In your hands she should be strong, and the happiness of sacrifice and self-control, which is the priceless reward of those who keep my words, should be hers, even as it

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is already yours. In short, my sister commends this union and I command it. Livia must abandon Festus and cast in her lot with you. The future will depend upon your united efforts, and the ultimate reward, since I am the living soul of justice, may safely be left to me."

Evander bowed and became a little too self-conscious for the company of his god.

"Only an intellectual could afford to pursue this line of action, Shining One; but what would be difficult, probably impossible, for those of less luminous faith and moral courage, will be well within my power."

Thus replied Evander (smugly, it must be confessed) and the god snubbed him.

"Boast not yourself in your intellect, but on my support," he answered. "I notice among certain of my followers a disposition to undue elation on the subject of their intelligence. Consider, however, who call you the 'intellectuals'? The rank and file of mankind, who, being practically without any intellect whatever, are prone to servile flattery

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before those who exhibit even a modest evidence thereof. There is no salt in the praise of fools, or significance in the applause of the norm of men. Your mental gymnastics and gyrations; your opinions and ideas; your approval or disapproval—these help not either to remodel the world, or alter the real convictions of anybody. Remember that when the gods design a change on earth, they do not choose the 'intellectuals' as their tools, but cast about for the man of his hands, whose force can influence his kind, whose voice can make a nation move at his call, whose power can be felt in the hearts of kingdoms. Those who have created the history of the human race, ate meat, risked their own lives daily and feared nothing. The 'intellectuals' are decorative, even valuable in their way, and I am the last to speak lightly of them, since one and all are mine; but if they have a fault, it is their unintelligent assumption that they really matter; and a stupid world, dazzled, as I say, by the slightest manifestation of intelligence, is prone to feed this error and

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foster their delusion. You have your place in the cosmos, even as art, music and other desirable manifestations of human energy and imagination, which I myself inspire ; but you must not make the mistake of supposing that you alter anything, retard anything, hasten anything, or control anything. You afford entertainment to a very small minority—nothing more than that.”

Before this challenge Evander showed a spark of human feeling. He tried, indeed, to get a little of his own back, as they say.

“ When you tell me that the ‘ intellectuals ’ are all yours, Giver of Light, I fear you have been misinformed,” he murmured. “ Certain of them wallow openly in the sty, and not only eat birds and beasts, but also wash them down with juice of the grape in very large quantities —when opportunity occurs. They preach their opinions balanced on a wine-skin, and some are notoriously at their best when under the influence of the accursed berry of Bacchus. Such take your doctrines plentifully diluted and glory in the flesh. They lead the life of

pleasure in body as well as spirit, and find existence much more amusing than, of course, they have any right to find it. I know what I am talking about, for I have met and argued with these fellows, and though they are a devious and tricky sort, who lack honesty in argument and care not by what mean dialectics they reach their goal, yet it is idle to deny them a surpassing measure of brain power, however false and ridiculous their conclusions."

" You know nothing at all," replied the god, " and if such vain sophists can get the better of you in argument, so much the worse for your own wits. I say that all of you, whether of my cult, or a lesser, are neither better nor worse than other people. You are, in fact, merely noisier. And when, therefore, you suggest that only an 'intellectual' can appropriate another man's wife without censure, you talk through your hat, if you will pardon the expression. You will run away with Livia, not because you are an 'intellectual,' but because I tell you to do so. You take her from the torment of life shared with Festus,

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because you are a man of courage and understanding, sense and self-control. Many who lay no claim to exceptional intellect have done as much—perhaps more successfully than you will. And remember for your chastening, that between the highest human intellect and the lowest, there is really no very appreciable diversity in divine eyes. The ants and locusts vary as much. They, too, have their ‘intellectuals,’ and the hive also knows them. One spider differs from another in cunning, and it is not the ‘intellectual’ fish that your father catches, but the duffer.

“ In truth,” concluded the Shining One “ you hold the germ of intellect, but really little more at this stage of your history, and the very fact that you ‘intellectuals,’ so to call you, are the last persons to the fore, when anything has got to be done, shows too clearly that reason is still but a broken reed among you. The prime gift of your Creator you resolutely flout and neglect. Why, even the ‘intellectuals’ themselves make war on reason, using their reasoning powers to do so ! ”

Evander bowed his head before this lecture, which he naturally applied to certain of his friends rather than himself. He then begged for guidance as to his next move and so put his foot into it once more.

“ The details are yours, not mine,” replied Apollo coldly. “ One does not come to me to learn the scales on the lyre, but to listen to the utmost a lyre can be made to do. You ask me to direct your course of action and I have done so. Being an ‘ intellectual,’ I doubt not the necessary details will lie within your reach. Your wits, I imagine, are called to cope with the right arm of Festus, for he attaches great importance to the possession of Livia, and will not suffer the woman to depart from him without such opposition as occurs to his indignant heart. Livia herself will raise no difficulty, since she aspires to be your helpmate ; but regarding Festus—that is entirely your affair, and if your intelligence and craft cannot triumph over his brute strength, then you will only afford another example of what I say : that the momentous affairs of the world

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depend far less upon the talkers, than the talkers are prone to believe."

Evander, however, discovered in his reply that diplomacy has its uses.

"Since the ultimate appeal must lie between Apollo and Bacchus," he answered, "there can be no doubt as to the issue."

The Lord of Light was gratified.

"You have spoken well," he said, "and I entertain every hope of your success."

He then vanished, and his disciple wandered down the mountain-side, deeply conscious that, for once, physical action was demanded. He hesitated to enter a world so much outside his own. In matters of thought, he had ever moved securely; but his thought, though it had often provoked other people through irritation into action, which it is the province of thought to do, had never taken him into the field of action until now.

He regretted the necessity. When something had to be said—disagreeable or otherwise—Evander was always ready and willing; but now something had to be done.

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He consoled himself with a reflection.

“Everybody knows that moral bravery is much rarer and grander than physical courage,” he thought. “Then it follows that I, who lack not the first gift, shall of a surety find myself endowed with the second.”

He began by doubting whether there was really any need for haste; but he decided before he reached his home that haste must be made. He felt that he had better act while the mandate of Apollo still sounded in his ears.

“To-night,” he said aloud. But his own familiar voice surprised him, for there had come into it a new and untroubled tone.

VIII

BACCHUS AND FESTUS

BY one of those coincidences, common in real life but viewed uneasily by the artist, Festus sought his god on the evening of the day when Evander listened to Apollo.

The woodman's patience broke down at last and he began to realise the gravity of his position. Livia threw on hard words and Festus grew ashamed and miserable at uttering so many. More than her perversity, it exasperated him to feel his own failure. He was angrier with himself than with her, as so often happens in these cases, for our annoyance, when our will fails to impose itself upon another, is really personal, though at the time we imagine otherwise.

Festus now felt the situation no longer to

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be endured, and when Carmenta, concerned for her daughter, told him that he was a tyrant, a bully, a slave-driver and a disgrace to manhood, he—poor soul—after failing to convince her that his only purpose was to open his wife's eyes to her mistake, began to see that none save Bacchus himself could throw any light upon the painful problem.

And when dusk came down, he sought the courts of the god, for it happened at this season that Bacchus and his train were harbouring in the woods about Larius, and the drone of drums, the tinkle of distant cymbals and the blaze of great fires were nightly to be heard and seen upon the hills.

Festus found the merry throng without difficulty. Bacchus himself, crowned with a wreath of ivy, lolled in the midst, while bacchants replenished his golden cup when it was empty. Silenus, oldest of satyrs—he who prompted Bacchus to the vine cult—sat beside him on a wine-skin. He was ancient, bald, pot-bellied, with a fat breast as hairy as a beast. His nose was round and red, his eyes,

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diamond bright and merry as laughter's self. An ass was tethered behind him and stood munching a litter of maize. The unvenerable but sagacious deity was not drunk, but merely market merry.

Round about a noble fire, that blazed in the midst of the party, sat also bearded Silvanus, protector of fields and flocks ; Faunus himself, divine master of all woodlands and wild creatures ; fair Libitina, guardian goddess of garths and voluptuous delights ; and august Mater Matuta, the deity of birth and dawn. Pales, who protects the herdsmen and shepherds, was also there, and young Feronia, spirit of flowers ; Pomona, goddess of the fruit trees, and Vertumnus, her husband, who taught the use of the pruning-knife. Nor was Juturna, mother of all fountains, absent ; she who bore to Janus young Fontus, the god of Springs.

Many lesser immortal folk completed the company. Fauns and satyrs ringed the fire, with nymphs and naiads of the rill and stream, oreads of the hills, dryads and hamadryads

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who cherish the forest trees. In a circle close to the burning logs, their eyes glimmering like emeralds and rubies, sat the Panisci eating grapes and warming their little ivory hooves. The bacchants had laid down their thyrsi, their tambourines and their cymbals and were also resting for a while after a corybantic whirlwind.

The oread who had recited to Carmenta, was just about to begin one of her poems, when Festus appeared in the red light and flung himself upon his face.

“Who art thou?” asked Libitina, and the suppliant, rising to his knees, made answer.

“I am Festus, the woodman, and I humbly pray my god and master to hear me.”

“You shall speak,” replied the Care-dispeller. “Not that it is needful, for I know why you are come; but first we will hear this oread, whose turn it is to entertain us.”

“Great god,” began the oread, “I much fear the poem is overlong.”

“Then do not make it longer with explanations and apologies,” retorted Bacchus. “We

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shall better judge if it be too long after we have heard it."

"It is a minor incident in the life of Demeter," proceeded the poet, and again Bacchus stopped her.

"All this we shall learn from the poem," he said. "Therefore proceed, fair lady, for other pleasures await us beside your verses."

The dreamy eyes of the god, which in the firelight were as deep pools of purple, shone benignantly beneath his crown of leaves, and when the oread began, he closed them, the better to estimate her performance.

She made a nervous start and it seemed, indeed, that her fatal weakness was always to extend her compositions beyond seemly length. But courtesy to an artist is a rule of the Bacchic court. Not a sound interrupted her delivery, and even the Panisci listened with the patience that the least of those who seek to entertain us should earn from right-thinking gods and men.

She told the tale of Demeter and that wilful

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imp, Abbas, who paid such a hard price for his improper behaviour.

On a far day, Demeter, wandering,
Came wearied to a little dingle deep,
Where leapt the crystal of a secret spring,
And countless starry blossoms woke from sleep.
The Mother smiled and took great joy to find
A peaceful resting-place so fitted to her mind.

Straight from the cold, sweet cisterns of the earth
That fountain leapt, the goddess longed to taste ;
But first she ministered unto the dearth
Of a wood hyacinth, then, without haste,
Made tender quest to see if all were well
With every precious thing that homed upon the dell.

She stroked the golden saxifrage that hung
Over the fountain ; many a primrose bright
Trembled beneath her hand ; aloft among
The lemon catkins, sparks of crimson light
The goddess counted, knowing that in these
Lay hid the harvest sweet of all those hazel trees.

The dim wood-rush, the dewy moschatel,
The sun-bright kingcup and the orchis sweet,
The least campanula with azure bell,
And the veined violet, kissed her tired feet.
Sure the forget-me-not had never known
That Dame Demeter's eyes were bluer than her own.

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Now sat she down and arched her stately palm
To make a ready cup whence she might drink ;
Whereon there swam, without a thought of harm,
A shoal of shining minnows to the brink ;
Touched her white fingers and, with glad surprise,
Stared up, a humble love in all their goggled eyes.

Alas ! that on an hour so gracious, fair
And comely, falls a shade ; it must be told
How laughter shrill awoke the ambient air,
And echoed rude and shrill and overbold.
A naked human boy the reeds among
Made faces and poked out his saucy little tongue.

Demeter, scarcely used to infant slight—
For sweet Persephone and griefs to come
Were hidden still within uncertain light
Of future time—the urchin ordered home.
But little Abbas laughed and disobeyed,
For at her lovely look, what child could be afraid ?

“ Then shalt thou be a human boy no more ! ”
Quoth the great goddess, “ but a plague and pest
To every traveller upon this shore.
To all who hither come on thirsty quest
Of these bright waters, henceforth, prone and mute,
Thou art, thou naughty rogue, a scarlet-crested newt ! ”

With but one cry poor Abbas, down and down,
Sank through the silver to the amber sands
Beneath the fountain ; changed from pink to brown ;
Put forth small paws instead of feet and hands ;

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Dwindled to inches three, while like a flame
Along his back and tail, a scarlet crest there came.

Now, when the wayworn traveller runs to sip
And bends to touch the sparkling crystal clear,
Young Abbas creeps upon his nether lip,
Whereon he leaps with horror, or with fear.
But should this hap to you, feel no annoy ;
The scarlet-crested newt was once a little boy.

None applauded at the completion of the poem until Bacchus clapped his hands. Then the oread received a gratifying testimonial to her talent.

“ Too long, as you feared,” declared the god, “ but none the less a promising effort.”

“ I have always thought that Demeter’s punishment was in excess of the child’s crime,” said Mater Matuta, “ but so, indeed, I often find myself thinking before the ways of gods with men.”

“ Demeter is a little apt to deceive humanity —unconsciously, of course,” remarked Silvanus. “ She looks so benignant that the people err, and having gazed upon her face, often find that her temper is cast in another pattern.”

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“ But she is a blessed goddess and has seen a great deal of trouble,” answered Juturna.

Then Bacchus turned to the oread.

“ You shall join us,” he said. “ Let her drink from my cup and sit beside me.”

“ We must tune her to wilder music, however—worthy of dithyrambic measures. This is a little starched and prim for our society,” declared Libitina.

They had all forgotten the woodman, but now the eyes of Bacchus sought him, where he stood without the circle leaning against a pine, and he bade Festus stand forth and tell his trouble.

“ I am a married man,” he announced, “ and knowing well that I worshipped Bacchus and made my sacrifice at his altar, Livia, the daughter of Carmenta, came to my home content that my god should henceforth be hers also. For a brief while all went happily with us, then circumstances inclined her to another god and she now worships Apollo. This is to break her bargain with me. I have done all in a man’s power to bring her back to you,

Divine One, but despite words and even blows, for in my exasperation I have struck her, she cleaves to Apollo and prays to him the more resolutely for my remonstrance. Nevertheless, I still love her, as never man loved woman before, and it is my love that persecutes her, since well I know that if she were her true self and not blinded and deluded, she would naturally find in Bacchus the rule most suited to her spirit. For she is changed by this error. She laughs no more, since Apollo loves not laughter ; she sings no more, out of fear that her singing will not be perfect enough for his ear. She suffers my correction with smiles of delight, and is happiest when I am most harsh. Thus the people see in her a martyr and in me a tyrant, whereas—fire-drakes and furies !—the truth is exactly contrariwise, for she is the tyrant and I am the martyr.

“ I pray, Vine-bringer, that you will light my steps in this sad tribulation and show me how best I may save my Livia—both for your worship and my love.”

“ Find somebody else,” advised Libitina.

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“That will soon bring her back to Bacchus and her proper mate.”

“I do not want anybody else, most gracious goddess,” replied the native. “I love her with a great passion and, as I tell you, but for this new craze, she would love me gloriously, as she did before she fell in with Phœbus. Even now her love has not withered to death. There is enough still left to leap into a fire again, if but this delusion were taken from her heart.”

“A child will bring her back,” foretold Mater Matuta.

“We are too far apart for that to happen,” replied Festus. “One cannot ask for such sacred gifts from Livia now. Who would desire to make a woman the mother of his child when so great a cloud stood between them ? ”

Then, looking upon this rough but honest-hearted woodman, Bacchus sorrowed for him.

“The future is hidden from the gods,” he said, “though it is our sleight to pretend otherwise. As a matter of fact, however,

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nobody is more anxious about the future than are we, and it may be that nobody has more reason for such anxiety. For the naked truth is this: that the gods and goddesses live in man's heart, not man in theirs; and if man pluck us out of his heart——”

He paused while a sigh and shiver passed through his assembly.

Faunus bent forward.

“These are no words for a human ear,” he whispered. “The peasant may proclaim this highly compromising truth to those who will understand it.”

“At any rate,” proceeded the Giver of the Vine, “it is something to deserve well of the future—a remark which applies quite as much to us as to you. Then, at least, we come to it with a clear conscience, and if the future fail us, we have not the additional bitterness of reproaching ourselves. We always hold our punishments too great for the occasion and our rewards too small. In fact, none that ever I met was satisfied with his good or ill.

“With respect to Livia,” he continued,

“ you err from natural forthrightness of mind. Livia must have full liberty to worship whom she will. No woman can pray to a god, unless he is in her heart ; and even if he be there, you finite beings are prone to self-deception and may either go with a god hidden in your heart and know it not, or fancy a god within you when he is far away. Not piety inclines Livia to Apollo, but a natural feminine desire to be out of the common if possible. If a woman find that she can cut a dash, she will seldom flinch from the pain of the price. Their ambition is ever to stand on a pedestal —nor do they stop to think if their feet be beautiful enough for that position. Livia, then, is cutting a dash, and you are helping her to do so. Thus her love is polluted at the source and she is loving you for being unkind ; whereas if she were not playing a part, she would hate you for being unkind in the normal manner. Go home, therefore, and be as kind as you know how. There is no zest like a martyr’s ; therefore cease to whet that zest and do what you may to damp it.

“ A period of discontent must follow, for none of us likes to come down off his or her pedestal ; but in process of time, love will return to its natural channel. In short, give her liberty and leave to pray to Apollo. Encourage her devotions. Remind her if she neglects them. Prepare his sacrifices for her ; beam upon her religious enthusiasm ; spare no thought or action to make her goings soft and her ways full of delight. All this lies well within your power, for you are a model husband. Persist in this course and, if I know anything of Livia’s heart, she will presently lose this Apollonian flair and perceive that your god has also a good deal to say for himself. She will find that I, Bacchus, have made her husband wise, tolerant and gentle ; that I have helped you to find the joke that lies in all human quarrels, like a sweet pip, at the core of every bitter apple. She will perceive that you are a sane man, who seeks to bring happiness to your fellow-creatures and shuns to come between them and anything that may cloud the little happiness they can hope for in this

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difficult business of leading a distinguished life. Then your altar shall again be her altar and your god her god. I speak, of course, with special knowledge of Livia. There are some women to whom Apollo makes more direct and real appeal than can I. But such a woman would not have wedded you. Therefore depart in peace and act as I have spoken."

Festus returned thanks in the best words that he could command, then went his way from the presence, in good heart and full of a cheerful determination to withstand his wife no more. He whistled down the mountain-side, stood for a moment to listen to the whirl and sob of the timbrels that broke out soon after his departure, and then sought his home.

But a shattering surprise awaited him. Evander, learning that Festus had gone to the mountains, doubted not that Apollo's hand was in it and, hastening to Livia, came before her as her saviour.

"Presently," said he, "we shall be united,

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and a life of ceaseless well-doing may, in the time to come, win us such divine recognition as we desire and must labour to deserve."

He then touched the practical side.

"A boat lies at the beach and I design to row you to yonder spur of land over against our present homes. On that peninsula we will dwell and soon win the people's hearts with our worth and wisdom. As for Festus, you need have no fear of him. We are under Apollo's protection henceforth, and no mightier god rules human hearts."

"It will be a nine-days' wonder," said Livia, "and people are sure to cry our names in the market-place. Oh, amazing Evander ! henceforth I dedicate my life to you, and never, if I live to be a hundred, can I repay you for your generosity and self-sacrifice. To have won such a spirit was worth my crown of suffering. And if you worship Apollo, then shall I worship you, for you are his priest for ever, and, through you, his ineffable and burning ray will fall a little gentler upon my heart. You shall lift me, raise me, sanctify

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me, until I am at last worthy of the god and you yourself."

"Excellent!" replied Evander. "Now follow me, if you please."

"For ever and for ever," she answered.

Thus it came about that when Festus burst into his hut, shouted for Livia and told her that Bacchus directed she must henceforth worship Apollo and command every facility for so doing, the lady was not there to hear his good news.

IX

THE PAIN OF THE PRICE

FOR a long time her great achievement obliterated the true Livia. So overwhelmed was she with the splendour of Evander's conduct, that her words came true and she showed him far more reverence and extended to him a worship more complete than Apollo himself won from her. She kept ever in mind the extent of her obligation and the immensity of his condescension. Indeed the remarkable thing that Evander had done, in rescuing Livia from Festus, ran on many tongues round the Larian lake, and the infamy of Livia's husband, flying on rumour's wings, grew greater as it spread, until the people considered whether he should be slain for his abominable conduct. Evander, on the contrary, though in plain Italian he had run away

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with another man's wife, became exalted and all men agreed that he was worthy of praise. To say that the folk were as pleased with him as he was with himself would be but a slight exaggeration.

For his part he treated Livia with reverence, and no doubt had she run away with any less excellent person than Evander, many unkindly words might have been spoken. But he was a man above reproach, and though certain brainless fellows of the baser sort held him to be a bore, that was the worst ever whispered against him. When, too, he stated to the inhabitants of the peninsula where now he made his home, that Apollo had personally directed him to save Livia for the faith, none dared criticise. Indeed, Evander came out of the incident with flying colours every way ; for it increased his own self-respect, which is always desirable ; it gave him for companion an adoring woman—a high fortune enough ; and it led the people to regard him as a man of fortitude and character and an acquisition to the peninsula in every way.

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His purpose was to educate and elevate all who would listen to him. He designed a sort of priestly ministration and hoped heartily to lessen the woes of the world with Livia's assistance. He credited her with sound judgment, in virtue of her attitude towards himself, and he argued that an intellect ready to accept him as completely and absolutely as she had done, must be of fine material and capable of considerable expansion.

It became his grateful task, therefore, to preach Apollo to Livia, and she for a considerable time made intuition, which she possessed, serve the turn of intellect, which she lacked. She flashed out admirable sentiments and even anticipated an Evander conclusion sometimes. Indeed, she promised well and they lived under one roof in great contentment. But the strain for Livia was severe. A woman can play a part with grace, success and personal enjoyment for a great length of time, but not for ever. The natural feminine instinct is toward a change, and when the actress finds life's play beginning to grow dull, her

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unfailing, artistic inspiration is to try something new and expand in a fresh character giving farther scope for her abilities.

Livia was called to play a decidedly difficult part during this season of her picturesque young life. Instead of the pressure diminishing, as she had hoped ; instead of creeping presently to the human side of Evander and winning a little respite from his exalted thinking and plain living, she found an opposite tendency. He was always most courteous and considerate, but he was also always austere and high-principled. He moved on such a plane that Livia sometimes felt the air almost too rarefied for her lungs. She struggled gamely to live up to him and she succeeded by the exercise of many deceptions and great courage. She kept her admiration and gratitude in the forefront of her mind and blamed her spirit bitterly at any occasional display of weakness, or shadow of doubt.

They lived platonically until Livia should be free, and Evander, though full of wisdom and virtue, failed to perceive that what was the

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natural condition of his spirit might not be reached by a lesser mind without effort. Indeed, he regarded Livia as his feminine counterpart, a musical echo of himself—in fact, Diana to his Apollo—and for a considerable time, at a cost he was never to learn, she succeeded in preserving this impression. She kept a sleepless watch upon her tongue and never uttered a natural thought uncensored by her mind. But the natural thoughts would rise, and though she put them from her with scorn and horror, they returned.

Mneme, that ancient Muse of Remembrance, did not forget her, and pictures from the past mirrored themselves in her wandering thoughts. They concerned the life with her mother, and it hurt her unutterably to find the lower part of her nature winning satisfaction in thinking of the days at the wash-tub. But what was far worse, when memory would wing, chiefly by night, her futile mind not seldom turned to her days with Festus. Nor did the spectacle disgust her as she had the right to expect, for it is a gracious quality of our simple human

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hearts to dwell upon the past sweet of life rather than the bitter, and memory, ignoring the indignities and sorrows and all things inconvenient in Livia's former existence with the woodman, turned its light and focussed its brightness on what was comely and made for their united happiness and content.

At first she regarded these recollections as a deliberate insult to Apollo and little less than an outrage on Evander; but the fact remained that in the night watches her heart turned upon past happiness.

She did not whisper these things to the partner her god had given her, but seeking to explain them to herself, entered upon a very painful and enlightening analysis of her own character. Her vocabulary was hardly equal to the test and, since the mind cannot outrun the machinery of words with which we think, no very subtle depths were plumbed by Livia. Perhaps no very subtle depths existed. She found at least that what she believed a lofty enthusiasm for Apollo, was in reality the sudden delight of finding herself at the centre

of her own small stage. It was not Apollo who had made her deny Festus and awaken his indignation and ill conduct, but the consciousness that by taking this course she had unexpectedly sprung into the most interesting and challenging girl beside the lake. Such fame resulted, not from her worship of Apollo, but from her husband's attitude towards that devotion, and she knew now exactly what Bacchus had explained to the woodman : that the opposition of Festus, with its consequent trial to herself, was what upheld her. A very stupid vanity had to be thanked for the situation ; and now looking back, she saw a little of her old true self and became exceedingly depressed. Nor did the way of Apollo, exemplified by Evander's steadfast conduct, serve as anodyne to her low spirits. She continued in an attitude quite servile towards her preserver ; but what was at first a reality, became in process of time to be a pose. She abated nothing of reverence and honestly felt the deepest regard for him ; but, in the secret places of her heart, she began to doubt

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whether Evander, despite his generous gifts of mind and beauty of person, despite his cool and dignified temper, level judgments and unfailing and beautiful attitude to herself, really knew anything more about love than a caterpillar. Love, in her experience, demanded for its rites a certain lack of—well, ‘self-consciousness’ was the only word that occurred to her. Love argued a power to forget yourself sometimes and sacrifice to passion. Now Evander condescended to no such concessions. It was wildly impossible that he should forget himself for a moment, and his blood never prompted him to play the fool even for half an hour. Livia accordingly was called to be careful. Not that the slightest temptation ever offered to play the fool with Evander. His measured accents, deliberate actions and intellectual outlook on all things, both great and small, left no room within his ordered days for frivolity and tempted none in other people. He never unbent the bow, and having, as we have seen, a mistaken impression that Livia was the feminine complement of

himself, felt not the slightest suspicion that she desired or required any such relaxation.

He designed for them a lifetime of well-doing, and his ambition was to emulate the mighty teachers of old and presently go to Rome and found a Porch, wherein he might instruct the rising generation for Apollo's sake. Livia would, of course, do her part also.

But what of Festus?

It is certain that he suffered a great deal, and his experiences, beating on a third-class brain that could neither appreciate nor explain them, very nearly unseated his reason. Indeed, he endured great torments, because his convictions, inspired by genuine love for Livia, hammered into him that these things were not only contrary to justice and right, but flouted reason also. For Livia had loved him: he knew it. She must soon have been supremely happy with him had she waited for his return from Bacchus. In their bitterest moments she had loved him, and it was his love of her that had made him cruel.

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He threw all the blame on Evander, and his first design was to swim across the lake with a knife in his teeth and not rest until he had slain his rival. But a storm blew next day, and by the time it had abated the anger of Festus began to kindle against Livia herself. Everywhere the people shouted at him that she was a heroine and that he was a brute. They told him that he had got less than he deserved ; that henceforth he would be a pariah among them and no fit company for honest men.

He went to see Carmenta, who greeted him somewhat coldly, but she blamed him less for being wicked than foolish.

“ You will live it down,” said she. “ This comes of marriage. Be warned ; set her free as quickly as the law permits, and let Evander marry her. We shall then learn if his wisdom extends to living in this doubtful state. As far as women go, though Livia is my own daughter, be sure there are as good fish in the lake as ever came out of it ; and always were and always will be ; but ‘ once bit twice shy ’ is a sound saying. Don’t marry again. Leave

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these new-fangled complications of life to your betters and remain free."

Festus thanked Carmenta, who had put an idea into his head. As so often happens when we give advice, the point to which we attach the least importance is seized on by the listener, who anon tells us that what we counselled he has performed, though we may doubt exceedingly whether our words fairly bore the interpretation he has placed upon them.

Festus, however, did not do what Livia's mother advised, for her suggestion set him on a new train of thoughts. There was not as good a girl in the world for him as the wife he had won. There could be no second Livia, and he perceived that any attempt to be angry with her for more than a moment at a time was impossible. To hate her would be to misread the past in the light of the present; to contemplate a future without her was still quite beyond his simple soul. In fact he refused to do so, and when Carmenta reminded him that he must now invoke the law and separate from Livia, he started on a series of considerations

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which calmed him for a time and even helped to soothe his bewildered and stricken heart.

“They can’t have it both ways,” reflected Festus. “Indeed, the situation is a nightmare—not a reality at all. I’m hoodwinked, spellbound, hag-ridden, foredoomed, fated, and all the rest of it, if you look at my fix from the outside ; but there is one stark reality to cling to in this welter, and that is—I’m married. I’m married to Livia, and not fifty Apollos can undo it if I don’t choose.”

He had wandered as far as the forge of the smith by this time and looked in to see if Fabius scowled upon him, as most people now were wont to do. But Fabius never scowled upon anything, unless it was a stubborn mule who would not be shod. For the moment he was singing a song to the beat of a heavy sledge-hammer.

He had but one song and he sang it many times a day.

I’ll sing a song—
Ding-ding-a-dong—
Shall waken yesterday from slumber.

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I'll dust its toys,
And tell its joys,
Its pleasures count, its troubles number.
Ding-ding-a-dong,
Ding-ding-a-dong—
I waken yesterday from slumber.

I'll sing a song—
Ding-ding-a-dong—
Shall the eternal present favour
And tune my lay
Unto to-day,
Its greatness and its stinging savour.
Ding-ding-a-dong,
Ding-ding-a-dong—
I the eternal present favour.

I'll sing a song—
Ding-ding-a-dong—
Shall glorify a glad to-morrow.
Since time untold
Do all men hold
The only time that knows no sorrow.
Ding-ding-a-dong,
Ding-ding-a-dong—
I glorify a glad to-morrow.

“ Can I do anything for you, Festus, disciple
of Bacchus ? ” asked the smith mildly.

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“ Yes,” answered Festus, “ you can sing that last verse again.”

Fabius obliged him and the woodman spoke.

“ It is a great truth you sing,” he declared. “ Though the past is sad and the present still more so—I speak of myself—the future cannot be.”

“ The future has no attributes,” answered the old man, “ and therefore the truest wisdom is to live as much in the future as possible. The sure instinct of mankind is to do so. From the present, full often, we look back at the past and find, to our surprise, that we have left behind the happiness we thought had yet to come. Then we shed futile tears, that we cannot go back and live those days again with understanding and acknowledgment of their worth ; but the future is always unsullied ; the future is the home of good resolves—an unturned page pure for most of us ; though indeed many defile it by anticipation.”

So Festus went on his way a little happier, and if his future embraced no higher hope,

or nobler purpose, than to win back Livia and be a good husband, we must remember an ambition that looks mean to us, with two thousand five hundred years of marriage behind us, was a new and a great thing to him. The state conveyed no solemn tradition ; it came not sanctified through the centuries ; and that Livia had broken her contract did not inspire in his mind that universal indignation proper to such an act to-day. Because she, too, could not know what the mystery of marriage meant, or measure fairly the enormity of her rebellion. All that Festus really understood was this : he wanted Livia back again with his whole heart, and the problem before him simply amounted to a question of how quickly he could get her back.

He did not fear Evander in the least ; Apollo was, of course, the difficulty. But even here he felt that things might come right at no distant time, for surely Apollo could not remain long under the delusion that Livia was a true disciple and servant ? The gods were highly intelligent ; therefore Apollo must

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surely discover that Livia could never be of his elect.

That night there came a dream to Festus, though it was red dawn before he slept. It seemed that Mercury had sent Morpheus—that gentle son of Sleep—through the gate of horn; yet Morpheus did nothing in particular. He merely smiled on Festus, bade him be of good heart, and then warbled—no divine hymn, or celestial measure, but the third verse of the smith's homely little song. Thus Festus woke refreshed; for a good dream will often strengthen the weary spirit more than sleep itself.

X

LIVIA LAUGHED

EVANDER grew mildly anxious because there came no news concerning Festus.

“If his wits were as quick as his temper, you would doubtless be free ere this,” he said to Livia. “For the moment we must wait his pleasure. One can only hope that his sense of decorum, or the good advice of other people, will induce him to proceed and liberate you as swiftly as it may be done.”

Livia was, however, depressed at this season, and Evander, with a view to cheering her spirits, decided that they should make a holiday.

Wondering in secret what his idea of a holiday might be, she willingly agreed to do as he desired.

LIVIA LAUGHED

“ My father,” he said, “ shall row us across the lake to the eastern shore, whence he and I originally came. Then will we climb aloft and eat a meal lifted up nigh the snows on yonder mountain. Perchance Apollo may look upon us and utter a word of encouragement and cheer, for he often visits that lofty region.”

Cornelius, Evander’s father, rowed them, and they landed where to-day the rowan-red tower of Varenna stands to fling the music of silver bells over the water.

The old man promised to return at evening time, and, meanwhile, set out to fish ; while Evander went forth beside Livia. They climbed among the cobbled tracks of the mules, ascended beyond the olive belt and presently walked amid the fir trees and breathed the breath of Eurus, which came to them cooled by mountain snows.

Evander found himself in an instructive mood and, forgetting that their purpose was pleasure, as instructive people so often do, he gleaned many a sound moral and elevating

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fable from the beautiful world spread around them.

They ate their simple repast, and while he did so, the young man repeated a poem which had come to him during the previous night.

“Being sleepless,” he said, “I looked up into the sky and composed the following stanzas.”

“Did you, dear heart?” she answered.
“How wonderful you are!”

“It is becoming in a disciple of Apollo to strike the lyre,” he answered.

“Quite,” she said.

Unlike the prolix oread, Evander kept his numbers short. It was an advantage that Livia did not fully appreciate as yet.

Now he recited his verses.

I do not think there is a lonely star
Upon the firmament’s unmeasured height.
To us they flash their messages of light
And show their circling places from afar;

But still, though to our seeing points of rest,
If we but soar aloft on reason’s wing,
We find in each a mother sun to bring
Life to the children parted from her breast.

LIVIA LAUGHED

What shall the giants blazing on our night
Behold among the worlds that call them sun ?
What consciousness is from their bosoms spun ?
What hearts do they enchant, what eyes delight ?

“Very beautiful,” declared Livia. “I’m sure Apollo would love it.”

“I am not so sure,” he replied. “It is, indeed, rather a perilous poem. You see, speculation of this sort travels very far beyond the accepted order of things, and may even tread on people’s corns. I am not altogether certain that it does not traverse sound dogma and perhaps even indicate a train of thought inimical to Apollo. Now, to tread on Apollo’s corns is no task for me.”

“Quite,” she answered, and Evander indicated annoyance.

“I wish you wouldn’t keep on saying ‘quite,’ ” he retorted. “When a woman hasn’t the most shadowy idea of what I am talking and doesn’t want to confess it, she always says ‘quite.’ Apollo, I repeat, might see in the poem a suspicion of unfaith. He might argue that we have his sun, and that

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his sun is enough for us, without vague opinions concerning other suns. Why, he might even be seriously annoyed with me for soaring aloft on reason's wing at all."

"Qu——" began Livia, but stopped. "In that case," she said, "I should forget all about the poem. If he heard it and resented it—how awful!"

Evander looked up a little nervously himself.

"It shows where versification uncontrolled by faith may land us," he declared. "I must make a sacrifice to Apollo and we can regard the poem as deleted from my repertory."

"If you would only sleep at night instead of thinking so much," she ventured. "And when you wake up, don't look at the stars. Just turn over and go to sleep again."

He reproached her.

"There was a time—and not a remote time—when you hoped that we might be translated into twin stars ourselves—circling in the heavens for ever and seen by common mortals every evening, or morning."

LIVIA LAUGHED

“ I know,” she replied wearily, “ but I’m not so keen as I used to be about what happens after I’m dead. I’m much more interested in what is going to happen before I’m dead. I suppose it’s a come down rather ; but after all, you’ve got to live before you die.”

“ True,” he admitted ; “ but life is merely a preparation for death, and in any case, when we consider the trifling duration of human life balanced against the immortality of stellar bodies, this existence is reduced to such a pin-point in time that one can hardly regard it seriously. How brief the fullest days ! How little to distinguish or commend them ! ”

“ Be bright,” she begged with a note of something akin to despair in her voice. “ Remember this is a pleasure party. We are going to be happy and live in the passing hour —just for once in a way. Whatever Apollo may say, he’s always bright, so I suppose he can’t blame us for trying to be.”

Evander shook his head.

“ I detect a play upon words,” he answered. “ That is unworthy of my Livia.”

EVANDER

She restrained a reply that would not have pleased him and apologised.

“Sorry,” she said, “but I wanted to get a light touch into our holiday if I could.”

“Do not confound light with levity,” he replied. “I am as willing as any man to enjoy innocent happiness, but you must be careful not to fall into a way of cultivating humour at the expense of wisdom. There is very little to laugh at in the world at any time, and we can be much better employed than in seeking that little. Laughter is, in fact, a form of madness. The man who laughs is, for the moment of that senseless explosion, no longer strictly sane. He is, as we say, beside himself. You will seldom find a person of distinguished mind indulge much in this weakness. It unseats the reason for the time being.”

They proceeded presently up the mountain-side, and Evander, though he affected the lightest vein he knew, took care to better every turn of the road with a wise word.

He was now improving Livia’s mind so fast and enlarging her sphere of mental activity by

LIVIA LAUGHED

such leaps and bounds, that sometimes she felt giddy and experienced a vertiginous emotion, as of falling from a great height and clutching in her passage at the stars. Her thoughts were, indeed, growing slightly too large for the brains the gods had given her, and this is a condition that makes the head ache. But even to ache was something in the passionless serenity of Evander's system, and she thanked him for that. Festus had made her body ache, when he struck her in his mistaken anger ; but Evander, after all, hurt most, and she had to confess it to her soul. She misunderstood the symptoms, however.

“ My poor head throbs to think how unworthy it is of such an amazing man,” thought Livia.

Now they passed a tiny farm, where poultry scratched and a young he-goat stood and browsed, tethered to the stem of a pear tree.

“ I am reminded of another trifle,” said Evander. “ If you've heard it before, stop me.”

Livia had heard it before, but she did not

EVANDER

stop him ; she never stopped him. She only concealed a yawn.

“A second of my dawn effusions,” he told her. “It is a fact that in the hour of the morning crepuscule, I nearly always find my most successful verses.”

Then he stood still and proceeded in this fashion.

At peep of day the barn cocks crow,
While still the stars are in the sky,
And men awakened are not slow
To curse their importunity.

At peep of day the wise ones keep
Their watch, to tell if Truth hath stirred ;
But they who shorten the world’s sleep
Shall never win the world’s good word.

“Quite,” said Livia—“quite beautiful I mean,” she added hurriedly—“so true ! ”

And then fell out a brief but fearful adventure that might have ended this narrative with a very dark tragedy. Livia learned how Death is always hiding behind life’s many-coloured tapestry and always ready to thrust his bony fingers through it, even while we stand

LIVIA LAUGHED

and admire the pattern. A file of four mules passed by, laden with charcoal from the beech woods, and the last, without shadow of warning, suddenly lashed out in Livia's direction, so that she was conscious of a cruel, steel shoe glittering within two inches of her face. The creature went round the corner almost before they realised what had happened, and then Evander, white with emotion, called upon Apollo to slay it. He stood and trembled in natural human horror at the thought of what might have been.

The mule lived a hateful life and had been made sore and cynical by many blows ; so that, when he saw a happy creature, he tried to make her unhappy. There are many other people who would have done the same.

Evander took the incident more seriously than Livia, who held that a miss was as good as a mile ; but he believed their sleepless god had lifted his almighty hand between the mule's hoof and the woman's beauty. He considered that sacrifice must at once be celebrated for so great a deliverance, and remembering

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the tethered goat behind them, turned back that he might make an offering to their divine preserver.

“ It is not your goat,” ventured Livia ; but people who design great gifts to the gods, do not permit piety to be hampered by trivial questions of fact. The ownership of the goat seemed a small matter in Evander’s eyes and he took the young creature from its tether. Then he led it to a flat stone, well suited to sacrifice, and prepared to slay it ; when the goat, apparently suspecting his purpose, made a sudden and desperate effort to escape.

Now it is a law of oblations that the victim which shows unwillingness, or attempts to evade the sacrificial knife, may undo all. Bad is the omen when an offering follows not in voluntary fashion to the altar ; while, conversely, if it bow its head and die without protest, the augury promises well. Evander’s goat escaped and thus the higher meaning of the sacrifice was frustrated ; but he, forgetting this for the moment, strove with all his might to

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recapture the creature, and, for the first time in her life, Livia saw the young man in a hurry.

To behold this staid and philosophic spirit capering after capricornus, offered such irresistible entertainment that the girl could only with a painful effort smother her laughter, and when, presently, the nimble kid doubled between Evander's legs and threw him over in an attitude utterly inglorious and undignified, Livia laughed, because she had to laugh. Then, feeling that she might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, she allowed her merriment full play. She had not laughed for several weeks and she made up for lost time. In truth she was still chuckling helplessly when her companion gathered himself up, adjusted his flagrant disarray and sat down to comfort a broken shin.

She ran to gather a cooling herb for the wound ; but Evander, on whose forehead now sat darkness, waved her from him.

“ Fond and foolish ! ” he said. “ Heaven support the man whose future wife finds

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matter for laughter in a sacrifice spoiled and a fellow-creature injured!"

"I didn't know you were hurt, dear Evander," she replied. "Don't think I am laughing at a sacrifice spoiled, or my own precious master in pain. I am laughing at the tricks of the clever little goat, who didn't want to die, and the madly funny figure you presented when you fell. And if you had only been able to see yourself as I did, you must have roared with laughter for a week, great and good though you are."

"Excuses aggravate your offence," he answered. "Well you know that physical accidents often embrace serious and far-reaching omens. To allow a depraved sense of humour to reduce you to the level of an idiot before my failure in this matter, ill becomes any woman who pretends to piety and self-respect. You stand much condemned, and your folly is a very poor compliment to Apollo, who generously prevented the mule from dashing out your apology for a brain."

LIVIA LAUGHED

Then did Livia lose her temper and make answer.

“ What’s the good of being alive if you’re always going on like this ? ” she asked passionately. “ You say ‘ Heaven help you ’ because I laugh when a bit of a goat knocks you heels over head, and I say ‘ Heaven help me, or any woman, whose husband can’t see anything funny on earth, and won’t let her either.’ You don’t understand what it is for a simple, every-day girl to live beyond the sound of laughter. I’m accustomed to it ; I miss it horribly. To go for weeks without even seeing a smile on your face is—oh, I don’t know what it is. But it makes me feel that I never, never please you. When people please you, you ought to smile at them. It’s only natural. It’s only human. Even the dumb animals try to smile—some of them. The kid smiled, I’m positive. At any rate, our dogs get fearfully down in the mouth if they don’t hear us laugh sometimes. They understand our laughter if they can’t laugh themselves.”

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“ Love me, love my god,” replied Evander coldly ; and far from smiling, he distinctly frowned. “ You cannot have it all your own way, Livia,” he continued, “ and only your feminine unreason induces you to imagine that you can. Apollo never laughs, and since I am his faithful servant, I never laugh and should think shame upon myself were I to do so. Laughter at best is always foolish, but in your case it was unseemly also ; for consider what you laughed at. You laughed at a he-goat who deliberately evaded sacrifice, and was doubtless assisted to do so by Bacchus, or some other enemy ; and you laughed at a physical misfortune, which overtook the one who should be nearest and dearest to you in the whole world. And what was Evander doing when you laughed ? He was endeavouring to recapture a beast, which he designed to sacrifice to our deity, as a slight recognition of his ineffable goodness and consideration. We need not stop to inquire whether Apollo protected you on my account, or on your own. It suffices that he did most surely save you

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from horrible and sudden destruction. And you laugh immoderately because, in my ardour and concern that the omens are unfavourable, I tumble down backwards, hurt myself a great deal, no matter where, and shed several drops of blood from my shin."

Livia was utterly contrite and subdued by this time.

"Forgive me," she said. "It is the privilege of gods and such men as you to forgive us commoner creatures. I'm sorry—heart-broken, in fact. I realise only too well what I have done, and I'll never laugh again as long as I live. I was over-excited after my own adventure, and if I hadn't laughed, I should have cried. And my mother, Carmenta, taught me from childhood that, when in doubt, it was always better to laugh than cry."

"Just a foolish thing your mother would say," replied he. "But know henceforth that all expressions of emotion, save religious fervour, are equally to be deprecated. As a matter of fact, in this particular case, tears I could have understood and pardoned easily.

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However, enough has been said. I forgive you. Dry your eyes. It is quite certain that we shall not see Apollo to-day, so we had better retrace our steps."

They returned to the shore without farther incident, but at the landing-stage, where Cornelius awaited them, were certain persons of the hamlet who congratulated Evander on the fame which began to gather about his footsteps.

He addressed them briefly, begged them to concentrate their attention on the God of Light, and so set off for the peninsula where now he dwelt.

When they landed, Evander, who had fallen very silent, went forward to their home, and Livia helped his father to draw up the boat upon the shore.

She liked old Cornelius and now related their unfortunate experience.

"He is so wonderful," she said, "but doubtless the wonderful are always difficult."

"As a rule, yes," admitted Cornelius.

"If I could but win him to the joy of life

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within the warmth of my circling arms!" mourned Livia.

Whereupon the ancient man gave her a very large, dead fish, which he had netted in the course of that morning.

"Win back that trout 'to the joy of life with the warmth of your circling arms,'" said he, "and if you succeed, then hope to do the same for my son, Evander."

XI

A PUTEAL

WHEN Evander presently heard that Festus had not separated himself from Livia under the law; and when he farther learned the woodman intended no such step, he began to be sorely troubled.

Needless to mention that a man of his principles had not treated the lady, save in the way of highest respect and honour, until he might legally take her to wife; but the refusal of Festus to comply with the State's requirements put Evander in a difficult position.

In those archaic times, it was not necessary that either a man, or woman, should be degraded, before the law granted freedom. Refinements of that sort grew out of a more truly religious age and the rare mental delicacy and culture of our Church and State as we have the

privilege to know them. But Evander could not wed Livia until Festus annulled her former marriage ; and this the girl's husband absolutely declined to do. Lesser men in this fix had doubtless fallen back on the old ways ; but not so Evander. It was marriage or nothing for him.

On a fine morning he left the peninsula and rowed himself across Larius to Livia's former home. He had heard that his action with respect to her had been much applauded ; he felt he was in the right to make Festus listen to reason, and he doubted not that he would meet with a strong body of opinion to support his argument.

But, steadfast soul that he was, he forgot the propensity to change which gives its rainbow charm to the human mind. Much had happened and a new spirit arisen since Evander rowed away with his father and Livia ; for it is a quality of ignorant people to veer with the wind. From that universal scorn directed against Festus, the folk had first begun to cool in enmity, and in a fortnight they turned round altogether and declared him worthy of applause.

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To his amazement old friends came back and new friends appeared. His determination, to prove faithful to the memory of his wife and his obstinate refusal to free her, awoke interest, then approval, and finally enthusiasm. The women who had thrown stones at him now brought gifts. He found himself an object of regard, and his neighbours declared that they were proud of him.

And Festus, well knowing that the voice of the people is the voice of the gods, grew more cheerful in his going, and felt that this sudden return of popularity was an omen of future happiness. He became more than ever fixed in mind to wait with patience the progress of events. He felt a growing conviction that time was on his side, and designed presently to restore his happiness, in the shape of his Livia.

On the occasion of a public ceremony, Fabius, the smith, addressed the people and commended the woodman to them for his great fortitude and faithfulness. The business had nothing to do with Festus, or Fabius

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either, but such was the regard now manifested to the man who had lost his wife, that when Fabius, after a brief address concerning the matter in hand, touched the affairs of certain among the people, his allusion to Festus was much applauded.

A thunderbolt had fallen in a public place, and, as usual upon such a solemn occurrence, the people set about due observances. Their faith demanded that the bolt of Jupiter, where it fell, should be buried in a grave, with ceremonies and offerings. It was the pious task of those among whom the lightning had struck, to inter it in seemly fashion and to lift a puteal, or inclosure of stone, about the spot. The earth touched by the divine fire was collected and placed in a bottomless coffin, while round about the lightning's grave, a wall was raised and the event inscribed upon it. Onions and other sacrifices were then offered ; and if by evil chance a human being had perished at the stroke, he, too, was buried and the spot sanctified for ever.

On this occasion, happily, no victim sank

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into the earth, and the burying of the lightning being duly accomplished, Fabius, who officiated, addressed the people. He had just pronounced a handsome eulogy on Festus, who fortunately was not himself present, when Evander's boat touched the shore and, seeing the company engaged in some sacred rite, he proceeded to join them.

Being only aware of the general sentiment in his favour when he rescued Livia, and knowing not that the wind now set in his rival's sail, he marched to the midst of the company with assurance and expected that they would greet him as one worthy of honour and regard. When, therefore, he faced scowling foreheads and clenched fists, sulky eyes and harsh voices, he suffered much amazement and a certain natural indignation.

For the moment the explanation of such a change was withheld from him, but when Fabius had concluded his oration, the bitter truth hurtled about the visitor's ears and he learned that, far from applauding his achievements, all men now held Evander to have done

an evil and unsocial deed. Not a soul was on his side. Therefore, instead of putting the case before the husband of Livia and directing Festus to divorce her immediately, or incur the anger of Apollo, Evander found himself threatened very sharply with the displeasure of Bacchus. He had, in fact, forgotten all about Bacchus. Now was he beaten by many tongues and scourged with the sharp voices both of men and women. Neither would any hear his defence, and when he sought to speak, they shouted him down and became so threatening that the philosopher was constrained to run for it. He revealed an unexpected turn of speed as he hastened to his boat, and when he perceived that other boats were about to set out to his hurt, he pulled steadily and strongly into mid-lake and did not desist until beyond reach of danger.

Incidentally he called upon Apollo to withstand his mistaken enemies and drown their wherries ; but, to his disappointment, the god was at no pains to assist him on this occasion,

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and Evander returned whence he had come in very deep concern.

He informed Livia of what had taken place and she wept grievously. Nor did her tears abate when he explained that this evil thing had doubtless happened as a punishment for the frustrated sacrifice already recorded upon their recent holiday.

“ We must mortify ourselves and do bitter penance,” declared he. “ We are in the shadow of our god’s wrath and shall need to abase our spirits to the dust and suffer in our bodies and souls, lest a worse thing come upon us.”

Then Livia began to feel in her fair flesh what it meant to live with an ‘ intellectual’ ; but the severity of their fastings and the ingenuity of the discomforts designed by Evander were as nothing in her mind to the bitter knowledge that he had lost the goodwill of the people, and that the thing they had done was no longer accounted heroic and worthy of admiration, but quite the contrary.

“ If they think thus of him, what think

they of me?" she asked herself; and the reply of her spirit made her complicated penance quite trifling by comparison.

And then arose within her a mighty resolve and the desire to accomplish a deed the like of which no woman had ever yet done. She succeeded without difficulty in convincing herself that it would be for the best in any event, and such was Livia's desperation that, though her purpose threatened her life, she cared not.

Had either Festus, or Evander, suspected her intention, it is certain that he had experienced the most acute anxiety; but she revealed the matter to none; not even to a god did she confess it; for at this unhappy moment, Livia felt only too conscious that no god, or goddess, could be expected to feel the least interest in her. So she determined to do, or die, and cared little about the sequel of her adventure; for whether she perished, or came out alive, the future appeared almost equally unpromising.

XII

THE NAIADS

A PARTY of naiads, tiring of the water-springs, descended on a night of full moon to Larius, that they might disport them in the lake. These fair nymphs are related to the oceanids and nereids and share their virtues and admirable qualities. Naiads are the guardians of the fructifying water on which all life depends ; they are generous of favours and give increase to fruits and grain, to herds, to cattle and to mankind. They are, moreover, the guardian goddesses of marriage—a circumstance that proved most significant on this occasion—and since they were the foster-mothers of Bacchus himself in his infancy, it is reasonable to suppose that by the will of the god, though they knew it not, their way was turned to the waters of the lake upon this memorable night.

THE NAIADS

The tireless immortals revelled in their pleasure and plunged and dived with the grace and charm of gold and silver fish. Nor were they too breathless to sing. They lifted their sweet voices so that men or women who slept not, rose and listened to the unearthly melodies floating through the moonlight. And keen eyes saw the water broken into foam and the naiads, as they sped this way and that, under the cold radiance from above.

The beautiful beings rested presently, and one who was unusually wise, told of other lakes, more precious and sacred than Larius, that spread their shining faces near the great heart of Rome. She spoke of Diana Nemorensis and the waters over which she presided, and told how human women thither went to win the boon of the goddess. The naiad, as all naiads, sang rather than spoke ; and she sang in verse, according to their poetic custom, which changes not.

Here is her sanctuary and her grove
Where little Nemi's jade-green water fills
An emerald cup, while purple shadows rove
Upon the lake and the fair Alban hills.

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Ilex and arbutus and myrtle ray
The dusky brink, and throbbing nightingales
Pour out their muffled songs by night and day
Where the dim, secret, goddess-haunted vales
Open upon the waters. Yonder crags
Hold up a hamlet ; roofs and mellow walls
Of russet and of amber spring, and rags
Flash blue and crimson where the sunlight falls
In the dark ways. Beneath, reflected bright,
The village shines upon the placid face
Of Dian's sacred glass ; and on a night
Under the moon of promise, in their grace
Fair suppliant women met upon the shore
To beg for women's blessings, while the blaze
Of flaming, votive torches that they bore
Thrid fire through the dark forest, by whose ways
The future mothers in a choral band
Passed to the altars of the Huntress. Soon
They knelt and prayed, and each a blazing brand
Burned to Diana, till the risen moon
Ascending, rained her crystal light to cool
The sanguine passion of the running flame
That bound a hoop of fire about the pool
And circled sacred Nemi in her name.

The naiads praised their sister's song, and presently they were about to return to the shore and regain their fountains in the hills, when a human cry arrested them.

It was a woman's voice, and they feared

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that some impious persons had set forth in a boat to watch their revel ; but the moonlight revealed no boat and the cry was one of terror and distress.

Then they discerned a white arm lifted and saw that the sufferer must quickly perish if they did not hasten to her aid.

Leaving a wake of moonlit bubbles behind them, the naiads swam swiftly and were just in time to rescue Livia from Larius. For it was she who, inspired by mingled emotions, all quite beyond the reach of reason, had fondly thought to swim across the lake by night and so return to her mother !

Her purpose must, of course, have ended in death but for this supernatural intervention ; nor, examined intelligently, could any sufficient reason have been found for such a desperate expedient. No necessity had existed to fly from Evander, for he was not in the least that sort of person. But she neither explained nor invited his opinion of her project. Instead, with a certain vanity, for which there was no longer any excuse, she

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believed that Evander would feel his life but a broken reed without her and most surely refuse any suggestion of a separation. For her, however, farther life with this exceptional man began to be impossible. Thus was she driven to her rash endeavour, for she felt that even death by drowning would be better than life under these penitential conditions with the servant of Apollo.

Now, thanks to the protecting arms of the naiads, her life was saved, and when she was able to speak again and explain her position and wishes, they bore her among them to the shore, rayed her in a garment of reeds and lily flags, kissed her, hoped she would yet be happy, and left her to go to her mother's house.

Carmenta, as may be imagined, was beyond measure surprised to see her shivering girl and hear how Livia had attempted to swim the lake and been saved by benignant water nymphs. In her common-sense way she thanked the gods for their mercies, lighted a fire of charcoal, and prepared a hot drink of

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milk for her daughter ; and when Livia was better and more collected, Carmenta sat beside her and uttered hopeful words, until the young woman fell into a refreshing sleep. Then her mother drew a hood over her grey head and went swiftly through the first light of dawn to call upon Festus and tell him what had happened.

She was just in time to catch the woodman before he started for the forest, and when he heard the tremendous news that his wife was at Carmenta's home, he dropped his axe and his basket and hastened then and there with mighty strides to the cottage where Livia slept.

He reached it long before Carmenta returned. Then he entered and stood presently quite silent with beating heart before the pallet on which Livia lay. He feared his throbbing pulses would wake her and devoured her with his eyes, as the fore-glow warmed the morning and cast a rosy light into the cabin. It seemed that his presence had entered the consciousness of the sleeper by channels un-

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known, for she woke suddenly, beheld Festus gazing down upon her with wet eyes, and leaping to her feet, she knelt before him and embraced his knees.

“ For God’s sake take me back to you ! ” cried Livia.

“ For what god’s sake ? ” he asked, his hands trembling to encircle her.

“ For your god—for your god,” she answered “ I will pray to any god, or goddess—anybody—anybody in heaven but Apollo.”

“ I cling still to Bacchus,” replied her husband ; and then he embraced her, blessed her with heartfelt blessings, and praised the Bringer of the Vine for his goodness and mercy.

“ The night is turned into day,” said he, “ even as my sorrow is turned into joy. You, too, have suffered——”

“ I have,” said Livia.

“ Then let our dreadful lesson suffice for our lives,” he implored her. “ Let no shadow ever come betwixt us more ; and let not the rising sun descend again until we have made

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sacrifices, ample and generous, to our blessed, all watchful, all kindly Bacchus, who has saved you and the situation, and rewarded my patience and longsuffering in this glorious manner."

"Never again," she assured him, "shall I have a thought you cannot echo, or whisper a prayer you cannot applaud. I will cease not in my service and worship of Bacchus, and, so far as I may, reward the mighty god for his unspeakable and undeserved kindness."

"Who could say fairer?" cried Festus with great joy.

Then Carmenta returned and the man stopped to breakfast, after which his wife and he repaired to the Bacchic altar; and all the people grew merry and happy to learn how Fate had wearied of tormenting the woodman and restored a sadder and a wiser Livia to her husband's arms.

That day they ceased not to sacrifice to Bacchus until the stones of the altar ran with fatness; and since the sheep that Festus purchased for this act of devotion and grati-

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tude all came willingly to play their painful part in the rite, there existed no doubt in any orthodox mind that the god accepted their offering and deigned to be their friend during the future, as he had so notably proved himself in the past.

XIII

WOE OF EVANDER

WHEN Evander heard all that had happened and how Livia was returned to Festus, woe settled upon him like a stifling garment, and he threw ashes on his head and became deeply dejected. He remembered bitterly how of old Midas hunted in the forest, that he might find and question the god, Silenus, and how at last he met him in the train of Bacchus and asked him the great and grand question, ‘What is best of all and most desirable for mankind?’ At first the deity remained dumb, then, urged to speak, he had retorted upon the King with biting words.

“Oh, wretched race of a day!” cried Silenus, “children of chance, heirs of misery, why do you compel me to say what is least

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expedient for you to hear? The best and most desirable thing for humankind lies eternally beyond their reach. It is best not to be born at all."

For a season Evander believed this dreadful, if Hibernian, utterance of the god, and he departed and hid himself for three days in the loneliness of the hills. But he took his tablets, well knowing, as a poet should, that even his pangs would probably seek to be expressed in terms of art.

"I suffer agony," he said to his father, Cornelius, "and since the suffering of an 'intellectual' will often produce very exalted poetry, or even prose, calculated to allay the lesser pangs of commonplace people, I take my notebook with me. It is, however, impossible at present to describe my grief at this unseemly incident. Do not seek me. I shall return after the worst is over; but when that will happen, and when I shall find myself in a state of mind to proceed with my life in a manner worthy of my ideals, I cannot at present determine."

Then Evander went off and truly endured

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excruciating torments. He cared not whether the sun scorched, or the rain drenched him in his lonely wanderings. When he was athirst, he drank of the brooks, and when hungry, ate roots or nourishing herbs. For it was not the season of fruits, or nuts ; therefore even in his misery, he knew that it would be necessary to return to civilisation soon if he desired to live.

At first, indeed, such was his confusion and sorrow, that he felt indifferent. In the earliest flush of his sufferings he blamed himself and endured a genuine shame that he had failed to win Livia ; but his self-respect was not long shaken and he soon understood that not he was worthy of censure. As Festus before him, he perceived that Livia was the offender. She had fallen from grace and shown herself unequal to any life of real distinction. Temporary connection with her faulty character it was that had reduced him to his present insufferable position.

But he could not escape thus. Logic reminded him that he had failed to measure

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Livia, that he had deemed her a woman well worthy of himself not many weeks ago, and that it should have been his part to recognise her limitations and make no such transparent error. His intellect had failed to read one which now proved vastly inferior. Then what of his own mental gifts?

Thus he found himself faced with the hateful conclusion that he was not the man he had thought himself to be—always the most painful revelation for any of us. Indeed it demands some courage and good sense to hold on in steadfast fashion, after sanely and squarely accepting the fact that our self-valuation is mistaken; and few are courageous enough either to admit the doubt or stand up to the consequence.

In the chastened mood awakened by such a discovery, truth may come as a tonic, or a sedative, according to the humour and bent of those who are faced with it. For Evander (who after all was an artist in his way) it wakened his muse. He sat on a mossy stone in the sun, drew out his tablets and composed

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the following pessimistic verses. But before he had finished with them and was about to experience the relaxation of grief that creation brings, Apollo's bow flashed its prismatic glory upon the bosom of a purple cloud ; and this accident inspired him to a philosophic conclusion.

Thus he wrote :

My life's but an antic
Half sane and half frantic,
Half kicks and half halfpence,
 Half smiles and half tears ;
Half dross and half treasure,
Half pain and half pleasure,
Half dreaming, half seeming,
 Half hopes and half fears.

A seat in a galley,
A little blind alley,
A plunge into being,
 A leaf in the wind,
A beautiful bubble
On oceans of trouble,
A road where the signposts
 Are all going blind.

A shadow that passes
Along thirsty grasses,

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A fungus that's fretting
The face of the earth ;
A pitiful blunder,
A sorrowful wonder,
A cry out of darkness,
A hunger, a dearth.

A cradle to cry in,
A coffin to lie in—
Betwixt them I steal
 Past the fun of the fair—
Chance calling, Fate guiding
Life's roundabout gliding,
Till Death, the grey dustman,
 Surprises me there.

O link with thy glory
Both ends of my story,
Thou bow of my god
 Spanning sorrow and strife.
From osier to elm
Light some road through the realm
Where Evander still wanders
 The antres of life.

He liked this and it cheered him up ; for among the countless disabilities of a poet's existence, let it never be forgotten that he who makes things can always, for a season at least, escape his darkest suffering. And

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though the creative effort itself be a suffering and the thing made be brought out of pain, there is still a parental joy that heralds achievement. Time may kill the infant ; its creator on returning to it may destroy the bantling with his own hands as a creature unworthy to see the light ; but the gestation was not all pain ; the maturation served at least this purpose : that it came between the creator and reality for a season, suspended his life sorrows and enabled him to return to them with a mind rested, if not refreshed.

As Time gleans the first whiteness of the dayspring and stores a sunrise wonder, that he may turn its silver into gold at even, when dawn is forgot, so the artist, from precious moments of love, joy, grief, welds his lamp, to light other days and other hearts, when his own day is done, his own heart at rest. And if, as mostly happens, he lacks the authentic fire and his little taper is blown out even before his own pulse of life be extinguished, at least he has not missed the supreme joy of creation and upon his grave let it be written

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with reverence, ‘He tried to make beautiful things.’

Now Evander, at the first thrill of his rhymes, grew comforted.

“I may find this no good to-morrow,” he reflected, “but I like it for the moment; and now, while in a more placid mood, I will go on thinking about Livia and these present griefs.”

He did so and proceeded from the admission already reached: that he had been mistaken in her. Then, with an inspiration worthy of all praise in a man of his character, he asked himself whether it was possible she might have been mistaken in him. The question interested him deeply and he came to the conclusion that it was so: Livia had undoubtedly arrived at a mistaken conclusion. But wherefore? Was it her fault, or his own? He laboured the problem and began to retrace every incident of their unfortunate friendship, when an effulgent ray flashed across his vision and the divine form of his guardian god stood beside him.

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Evander abased himself and Apollo bade him get up and listen. The Fountain of Light was annoyed.

“I have heard what has happened,” he said, “and, needless to say, my anger is kindled. There has been a serious lapse here and I would learn the facts from your own lips, before proceeding to take what steps may be necessary for my honour.”

“At the moment when you revealed your godhead to my humble eyes, august Apollo, I was wrestling with the subject,” replied Evander. “I have spent long hours upon these inhospitable hills in deepest dejection, and my spirit has moved in the dust. But, thanks without doubt to your own beneficent voice in my heart, there has now come a salutary ray into the darkness. From this disaster I have learned a mighty truth: that man must, before all else, cultivate his imagination and enlarge his cosmic sympathies. In other and simpler words, it is up to us—all the time and every time—to look at other people’s point of view. To be inhuman in a human

world is waste of energy ; to stand aloof from a gregarious organisation is not the way to help it. In fact, to be really useful, we should first admit the humanity of all things human and the weakness of all things human. I was as weak as the rest. I, that thought I stood, fell into a grave error. The woman you gave me might have been won by sympathy, but proved invulnerable to doctrine. Some people seem to set a good example like a trap. Perhaps I did myself. At any rate, I see now that my methods and invincible dogmatism are not best suited to the work I desire to accomplish on your behalf, and henceforth I propose to alter my system and cultivate a more sympathetic attitude to my kind. Only so will it be possible for me—indeed, only so is it possible for any of us—gods or men—to fulfil our purpose. Not long since I heard an impious wretch declare that religion makes quite as many unhappy homes as drink ; and though, of course, that is going too far, yet——”

But the Delphic god had heard enough.

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“ Peace, preposterous person ! ” thundered outraged deity. “ Would you teach *ME* ! What whipper-snapper are *you* to tell gods and men their duty, and to dare mention gods and men in the same breath ? Whether it was your unspeakable stupidity, or her own wickedness, that has led Livia, the washerwoman’s daughter, back to Festus and my brother—my half-brother—matters not. For you, if you would escape my swiftest arrow yourself, double your worship, treble your burnt offerings and atone, in tears and tremblings as best you may, for your insolence and folly. To preach to me ! To babble your nonsense about cosmic sympathies to me ! Think you the cosmos is your affair ? Mend your own dreadful manners. Scourge your self-consequence and ridiculous vanity and leave cosmos to your betters. As for the woman, she dies. Many have I sent to the Shades for less than this, and, in eight-and-forty hours, if not less, the worthless creature will vanish off the earth for ever.”

“ Do you propose to destroy her on my

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account, or your own, Heavenly Musician?" ventured Evander. "If upon mine, I pray you listen to your sorrowing servant yet a little longer. When first she left me, I should have almost approved your purpose. I felt like that myself; but now I have searched the secret chambers of my own heart and am humbled. It was not all her fault. Her character proved different from what I had been led to imagine. I will not say that she purposely deceived me. Women must act, and sometimes they do not really mean to deceive us, any more than the professional mimes of the stage design to do so. Often they know that we know they're acting; and many men even like it. Livia is young, and as a matter of fact, when you saved her from the wolves, you turned her head. She was never worthy to be your disciple: she's not really built that way; while as far as I am concerned, she has taught me one thing—fool though she was. I am not a marrying man, Lord of Light. Even had she been more serious-minded, she would never have made me

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lastingly happy ; and it is quite certain that I should have made her lastingly miserable. These bitter truths I have learned in the solitude of the mountains ; and I rejoiced, even in my sufferings, to learn them, for I thought that you yourself had whispered them to me, and that my growing peace and resignation came from you.”

“ Not at all,” replied the god. “ You are merely following the line of least resistance and pretending that everything is for the best. Where do I come in ? You are great on points of view—well, what about mine ? I suppose it has not occurred to you to ask yourself that paramount question ? I arranged this affair. I had the matter in hand, and presently, when this clown, Festus, learned that he was inflicting a wicked wrong on Livia by not divorcing her, he would have done so. By leaving you, she stultifies me ; and the human being who stultifies me only does so once.”

“ She did not look at it in that way,” declared the young man, “ and your faithful

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Evander prays you upon his knees to spare her. I assure you that only nature, and not impiety, drew her away from me. Faunus may have inspired her, and it is ill to deny Faunus his way in the heart."

Apollo's brow grew darker than ever.

"This accursed woman has done you much harm," he said, "and as it appears you prefer your own stupid voice to mine, I will leave you to purify yourself and regain your wandering wits in the wilderness. Seek me no more until your soul is cleansed and you can talk sense. As for her, I repeat, she dies at a fitting opportunity. My name shall not be taken in vain."

"You couldn't punish me instead, I suppose, Everlasting One?" asked Evander, and the god replied :

"Very easily ; and you deserve punishment if ever idiot man deserved it. Your attitude to this disgraceful incident appals me. Be under no anxiety : your turn will also come."

"I said 'instead,'" murmured Apollo's un-

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happy disciple ; but the Source of Light vanished without more words, and Evander was left in the extremity of woe. He knew that Apollo must, of course, be right ; nevertheless his own weak and faulty humanity wept for Livia and his poor, finite understanding dared to suggest her destruction was an extreme step hardly excused by the facts. Looking back upon Apollonian doings, however, he remembered, only too surely, that the god never threatened in vain. It was clear that Livia must die ; and Evander felt that she and Festus had better learn her approaching doom as quickly as possible. In sober honesty he hated to have to tell them. Once he would not so much have minded ; but now real life had slightly modified his old serene outlook.

“ What will Bacchus do about it, I wonder ? ” thought the young man. He detected himself in impiety and trembled like a guilty thing before he reached his home again, for he knew that he did not see eye to eye with Apollo in this matter : he could not deny to his conscience

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that he both regretted and questioned the purpose of his god. And this was the unkindest cut of all, for he naturally suspected that a demon was playing with his understanding and tampering with his faith.

XIV

APOLLO AND BACCHUS

“**F**IRE-DRAKES and furies! Kill her for coming back to her lawful husband!” cried Festus, when Evander stood before him and his wife and proclaimed the dreadful tidings.

Livia fainted immediately, and when they had restored her to consciousness, Evander spoke to her husband.

“Understand,” he said, “that this dreadful affair has nothing whatever to do with me. While Livia was swimming away from me, I, on my side, had already begun to feel doubtful also. We were not so perfectly suited to one another as we imagined, and she must not think that she was the only one to find it out. I had slowly but surely begun to see it; before long I might even have brought her back

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to you myself. But Apollo—that is a very different matter. The Divine Archer takes the gravest possible view of Livia's conduct and will surely destroy her, because she has made his name a laughing-stock."

"I never did," declared the unfortunate victim of Apollo's anger. "I honestly thought I was going to be his servant and follower; but you showed me I wasn't. You cannot help your destiny, any more than you can help your nature. Plenty of people have changed their gods without dying for it."

"No man or woman plays fast and loose with Apollo," answered Evander. "You have done a dreadful thing, but on my knees I implored the Giver of Light to let you off. I offered to do anything in my power."

Then Festus spoke and revealed the extent of his love.

"Rather than that should happen," he said, "I will give up my own hope of happiness. If Livia is to die, I die also. But anything that can happen is better than her death. Since that is the awful doom pronounced upon

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her, you had better take her back, Evander, and train her in the worship of Apollo. Be tender to her, make her as happy as you can—and let her laugh sometimes, and teach her to forget me."

" Anything, as you say, is better than that Livia should die," admitted Evander somewhat ruefully, " but, I too, will gladly sacrifice my own peace of mind and prospects, if by so doing I can preserve her alive. Should the worst happen, that shall be done, if Apollo will permit it; and in my humble way I will try to give Livia a happy life and let her laugh as often as she finds she can. But it occurs to me that Bacchus also is a very great god, though of course I ought not to say so, or think so for a moment. Certainly I do not myself trust Bacchus, nor does Apollo; yet they both have the Eternal for father, and I cannot help feeling, under the circumstances, that Bacchus, who is a cunning and crafty spirit, might yet save the situation and get round the Source of all Light, if he cares to do so."

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“We will kneel in prayer to Bacchus instantly,” declared Festus, “and we will implore all our friends who believe in him to cease not from entreaty and sacrifice.”

“And I, on the other hand, would weary Apollo,” promised Evander, “but it is in vain just now to do so, for I regret to say his face is turned from me.”

They thanked him and from night far into dawn ceased not to importune the God of the Grape.

But little knew these three how near the woman’s fate had come, or what great matters had fallen out on the mountain-side, not ten miles distant, even while they spoke together.

For on a distant hill Apollo, descending with shining feet upon the hamlet, had met with Bacchus himself, and though the incident appeared accidental, it is most certain that such pregnant things as followed could not have happened by chance.

Bacchus was alone, sitting in his chariot and wrapt in divine meditation. His leopards

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crouched together drowsily, waiting for him to proceed. Their paws were tucked in and their green eyes shut. The god's companions had dispersed in the woods and he sat in immortal beauty with his young head upon his hand, his inscrutable eyes fixed upon distance—the true Dionysus of the Destinies.

He knew that Apollo must pass that way to destroy Livia, and had, of set purpose, hither brought himself, that he might discuss the case with his elder brother.

“ Well met, Lord of Day ! ” he said. “ You come upon my thoughts very happily and will not deny me a flash of the light you so generously dispense to great and small. I am concerned about a small matter touching humanity, and since your interests are also with mankind, it may well be that you can assist me.”

“ Humanity is very disappointing,” replied Apollo shortly. His bow was strung and he was fingering a silver arrow with a scarlet feather and bitter point.

“ We must not suffer it to disappoint us,” replied the other god. “ Consider first prin-

ciples. I hate metaphysics and you adore them ; but reason is reason, even if one be a god, and I venture to think that reason rejects as irrational this eternal demand on your part for unsullied perfection from a creature created imperfect."

" Man holds a possibility of approaching far nearer to perfection than is at present the case ; and it is our duty to urge him onwards, not hinder his footsteps—or unsteady them," replied Apollo.

" You allude to the grape, of course. We'll come to that, since you are good enough to let me detain you. Dear brother, remember this : if the pendulum doesn't swing, the machine stops. So the root of things is pulled up and we return to chaos. You are asking for the absolute, but the absolute is impossible. You know, as well as I do, that no such thing as the absolute exists. Mankind can be good or evil—he can be too good as well as too bad ; but it is beyond his power to be absolutely good, or absolutely wicked. Why, we can't ourselves ! It is equally impossible to

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have light without shadow, strength without weakness, ugliness without beauty, heat without cold, odd without even, the static without the dynamic—in a word, Apollo without Dionysus."

"Your vanity makes you think so," replied the elder deity. "I prospered exceedingly well before you were born. You are a hindrance to me, not a help."

"Jupiter, however, felt the need of me, be sure. But listen a little longer. I argue that everything is relative and dependent, nothing absolute and independent—not gods, or men. And think not that I care less for the human family than yourself. My hands are full of gifts for him."

"What gifts!"

"Yours we know," answered Bacchus. "You bring him light and music, the glory of heaven and the melody of the spheres, the rule of self-control, the noble doctrine of self-denial, fine thinking and pure living. I present him with the joyous grape, the dithyramb, the drama. From me springs art,

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which embraces not only the tragedy, but the comedy of life. My gifts, if you could only see it, are the complement of your own. I make man diligent and therefore happy. I inspire him to creation, and in his highest creative moments he comes nearest to yourself. Yours the blinding light ; mine the purple shadows wherein all born of women must pursue their toil. I loosen care ; tend that difficult plant, happiness ; smile on merry meetings ; inspire the race of men to give and forgive ; to share their few joys as well as their many griefs ; to find in their weakness a reason for unity and that universal sympathy wherein lies their sole hope of reaching the best they may reach. You light all human life ; I lighten it. Gentleness is mine and forgiveness. These, also, are virtues, for it is seldom unjust to forgive. I am in the thirsty man's flagon, the cold man's fire ; I know the frailty of mankind and condone it ; but you find that to be a task increasingly impossible and exaggerate their small faults, until they grow large enough for your great punishments."

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“ I punish for example,” replied Apollo sternly. “ I punish, that seeing the reward of ill-doing, man may rise above himself in his own interest to nobler conduct. Man is in blood akin to the brutes that perish ; and until we break the brute in him and drive it forth once and for ever, no large advance can be hoped. He must be tamed before anything useful will be done with him.”

“ You cannot have better bread than is made of wheat,” replied the younger god.

“ You can improve wheat.”

“ True, but wheat it will always be ; and you can improve man, but man he must always remain, and his mortal ancestry is a heritage beyond even your power to uproot or destroy.”

“ It is within our power to eradicate their vices,” replied Apollo. “ And that is my everlasting purpose and steadfast intention. You, on the contrary, pander to their weakness and exhibit a mistaken tenderness, which can only retard improvement and affirm him in his false opinions and vain conceit.”

“ Vice, as you call it—what does that mean, brother? If it means anything, it means the mess that man continually finds himself in as a result of his nurture, antecedents, and the iron ring of circumstance. We know that—he does not. Who deplores his vices more than he, poor fellow? But do remember that you are the son of Jupiter. Never lose your divine temper with these harassed and hardly-treated creatures. Recollect the grim legacy of the blood in their veins; consider the little measure of their intellect, the shortness of their days, the futility of their hopes, the pathetic limitation of their ambitions. If anything could make me weep, it is their ambitions. To be angry with such a race is bad enough; to destroy them because they err, ill becomes omnipotence.”

Apollo’s glorious blue eyes grew cloudy.

“ Look back,” continued the Care-dispeller. “ Take Niobe’s little business. You do not need to be reminded that both you and your divine sister were long in the cold among us after that ebullition. Yesterday I saw a

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human boy beating a gosling, and I asked him what the bird had done to make him so cruel. He replied that the goose-mother of the gosling had hissed at him, so he was making her child smart for it. You see the analogy? How were you better than this little idiot when you killed Niobe's boys and girls—butchered them one after another because their silly goose-mother, in her maternal pride, cackled at Latona? Niobe bore twelve children to a man; Latona bore two—to Jupiter; and this poor gnat-brained woman, proud of her pro-creation and ignorant of the fact that quality is more important than quantity, or a god and goddess worth a wilderness of boys and girls, permits herself a vain word at the expense of your august mother.

“ Had you reasoned with her in your glory; had Diana gone to her side and permitted her awful loveliness to burst upon the poor matron’s vision, she had repented, her face upon the earth, and, together with her progeny, made sacrifice and wept humble tears. Henceforth you would have been the

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tutelary god of all her children and her children's children. Instead, you sweep away a dozen promising young men and maidens, whose only fault was a stupid parent they did not choose for themselves."

"The sins of the fathers and the mothers shall be visited on the children," replied Apollo.

"Then the human boy who beat the gosling was right. But you know perfectly well he was not. You cannot and will not see that allowance must be made. You ram duty down their throats till they are poisoned with it. You blind them, weary them, oppress them under the weight of your own perfections. You are merciless—so is Diana. People without a sense of humour generally are. Forgiveness—why, my dear brother, these leopards are more forgiving than you."

"You confuse attributes," replied Apollo coldly. "Your leopards forget: they do not forgive."

"Well then, practise the art of forgetting. Your power is prodigious, but power without

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imagination plays the very Hades with human life. Consider how they use power themselves, and shudder. It is exercise of power without imagination that accounts for all the convulsions of their brief existence. From their insensate lust for power spring their cruelties, atrocities, misfortunes and bloody wars. Why can't you laugh at them sometimes, or, better still, laugh with them, as I do? Has my sovereignty weakened because I gave them the grape?"

"You know what I think about the grape," replied the brother of Bacchus.

"I do; but if you would try drinking it instead of thinking about it, you might make more friends. Consider how brimful of unconscious humour the mortals are. Why not let them amuse you sometimes, instead of shocking you always? Think, for example, how they measure everything in terms of their own reason. What can be more entertaining? They approach Nature on a rational basis and expect her—her, the mad mother—to proceed along the path of their own ratiocination.

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Does not that make you tender with them ? But I would forgive you if you were kind, for truth is greater than humour and compassion purer than wit. Let your sun shine on the just and the unjust, for its warmth may soften the hardest heart as well as gladden the best. Shall the immortal be less patient than man ? Observe how the human father treats his child —how patient he is, how longsuffering, how quick to find the bud of grace. Will you not even reach mankind's own ' *aidos*' ? Shall it be said that he has conceived a more perfect ideal than Apollo can attain ? Why, your servant Evander was sore troubled and wept many secret tears because you designed to slay the woman Livia. And yet he had endured more for her sake than anybody, and might have entertained a deeper grudge than you.

“ And remember this : it is really something to think about. *The god who neglects his opportunities will very soon find himself neglected.* Don't, I beg of you, for all our sakes, forget that ! ”

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Apollo nodded doubtfully.

"There may be truth in your remark," he answered. "I didn't know you had so much sense."

"Still they ask 'Why?' 'Whence?' 'Whither?' Still they win no reply; but what will happen when they grow weary of asking and find they are able to prosper without an answer?"

"We can't tell them what we don't know ourselves," replied the Light-Bringer moodily.

"Exactly. And if dogma is once diluted, the waves will break the dyke and we shall all be washed away together."

"We can remind them terribly that we exist."

"But how much better to remind them pleasantly. You're always wanting them to be godlike; but does it ever strike you that you might try with advantage to be manlike?"

The Divine Archer stared.

"This is sacrilege," he said. "You would strike at the very roots of religion. You would have us cease to be incomprehensible to man-

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kind. Vain Bacchus ! If we always did what their reason and sense of justice approved—what then ? We should be understood.”

“ And why not let them understand us ? Better that than they should grow weary of trying to do so ? For if once they find they can get on without us, and save time from religious precept for moral practice, where are we then ? ”

“ Religion and morals are one,” answered Apollo ; but his brother laughed gently.

“ Keep that for them,” he replied. “ You know better, and anything more immoral than divine behaviour on thousands of occasions, the history of our way with men does not hold. Religion is to morals as alchemy to chemistry, as astrology to astronomy ; and when humanity finds that out—well, brother, you may probably be the first to find naked altars ; as I shall be the last ; because the more humanity in the god, the longer humanity will tolerate him.”

Silenus lurched round the stem of a red pine behind their backs.

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He was going to shout ‘Cheer-o !’ when he saw Apollo. Whereupon he first put a drunken finger on his lips and then crept away on all fours.

“Take it not amiss that I have said these things,” concluded Bacchus. “The wisest of us make mistakes, and error and immortality may go hand in hand. The sum is that, instead of worshipping you and not me, or me and not you, mankind might do wiselier to set our temples side by side.”

The ghost of a smile flickered on Apollo’s glorious lips. It was but a transient twinkle, and yet all the children of men throughout the waking earth felt a sudden sense of well-being, a throb in their hearts of gladness at that splendid moment.

“Say you so ?” he asked. “Think you that your material outlook could ever chime harmoniously with the spiritual altitudes on which I move ? Shall your votaries of the valley breathe the icy mountain air where my disciples climb ?”

“ The truth lies ever in a golden mean,” answered Bacchus. “ In fact, for mortals at present you are Scylla and I, Charybdis : perhaps their only safe course is to steer between us and avoid both your rocks and my whirlpools. But we will confer, brother ; we will give and take and devise a new table of the law, wherein your counsels of perfection shall mingle with my joy of life as snow water with red wine. So shall my draught of philosophy be tempered by the spirit of your exalted ideals and bring to man the sweetness of the gods in a cup from which his human lips can drink. Above all, do not let us drown him between us. The more I see of man, the more I perceive he is prone to excess ; and yet if there is a drug best taken in homœopathic doses, it is religion.”

Apollo considered before replying ; then he spoke.

“ Since it seems you are come to years of discretion and dimly perceive some of the graver problems at present challenging

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Olympus," he answered, "we will, as you propose, have speech together; and should we arrive at any useful conclusions, submit them to our Father. It is, however, improbable. Meantime, of course, I know perfectly well why you have detained me and taken all this trouble. You shall have your way. I will spare Livia, the washerwoman's daughter."

He unstrung his bow, snapped his silver arrow with the scarlet feather, and flung the pieces upon the earth. Then he vanished upward into the light of evening, that washed heaven with rosy gold to the zenith.

Bacchus smiled wearily, while at the departure of his brother the Vine God's people returned to him.

"I am athirst," he said. "Bring me a cup of white wine."

Then, turning to a faun—one Coix, famed for his fleetness of foot—he bade him hasten to the valley and bring the news of her salvation to the wife of Festus.

"That done, swim the lake and tell Evander too," said he.

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Whereupon Coix leapt away, like a hart of the mountains, and the bacchants burst into a pæan of riotous delight. It was not often that they sang praises to Apollo, but with one heart and voice they did on this occasion, and the Light-Bringer himself, hearing them from his high place, felt not ill pleased.

THE END

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